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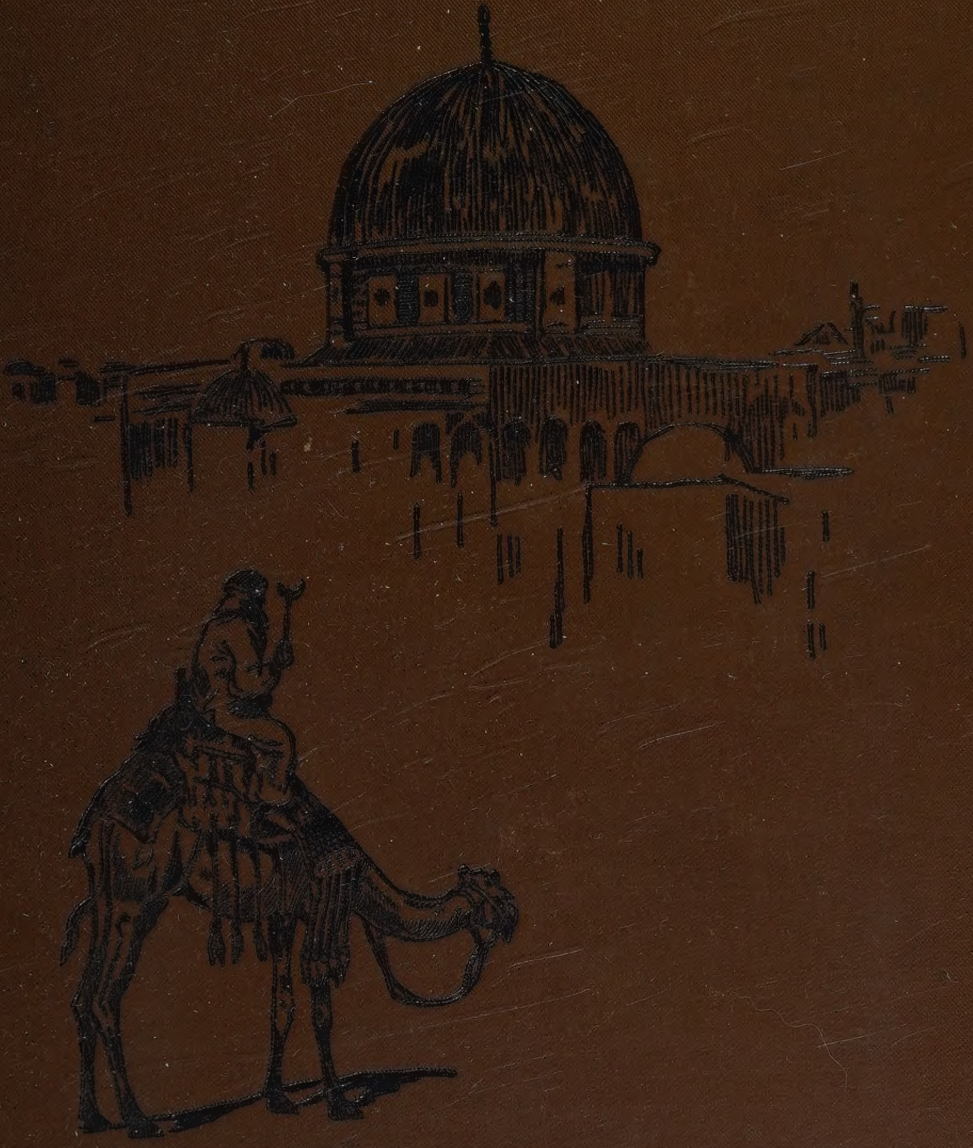

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CENTRAL PALESTINE AND PHŒNICIA

BY

WILLIAM M. THOMSON, D.D.
FORTY-FIVE YEARS A MISSIONARY IN SYRIA AND PALESTINE

130 ILLUSTRATIONS AND MAPS

POPULAR EDITION

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PREFACE.

THE Kingdom of Judah, including within its territorial limits the whole of Southern Palestine and Jerusalem, has been traversed and described in a previous work.

Central Palestine, comprising Samaria and Lower and Upper Galilee, was not only the largest, but also the most beautiful and fertile, portion of the land of Israel, and is now pre-eminently distinguished for the number, variety, and importance of its historic sites and sacred scenes. There lived and labored most of the great prophets mentioned in the Old Testament, and there also dwelt the Saviour of men during nearly the entire period of his life on earth. Though he was born in Bethlehem, Nazareth was his home, and in Capernaum, "his own city," on the shore of the Sea of Gennesaret, many of his mighty works were accomplished. He may not have entered those ancient Phœnician towns, still he visited "the coasts of Tyre and Sidon," and there performed one of his acts of tender compassion and healing mercy.

It imparts a special charm to the pilgrim through that region to feel assured that our blessed Lord himself traversed every part of it in his numerous journeys, preaching the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God. On those very mountains and hills, through the valleys, and across the plains, walked "those blessed feet." Over the same

Sea of Galilee the visitor of to-day can sail in just such a "ship" as Jesus did more than eighteen hundred years ago. He can take his seat, in imagination, with the multitudes that assembled to hear the Great Teacher, on the shore near Capernaum, and listen to the divine discourse of Jesus delivered from Simon Peter's boat moored not far off. And in that same region, also, "walking by the Sea of Galilee," he can remember that it was from thence that Jesus "called" those twelve men whom he ordained apostles, and sent them forth to establish his glorious kingdom in the world.

To the intelligent tourist, the devout believer, and the student of the Bible the entire country from Bethlehem to Dan, and from Dan to Hermon, the Mount of the Transfiguration, and from there to "the coasts of Tyre and Sidon," is invested with unique and unparalleled interest. The author's personal acquaintance with that region has been exceptionally intimate; for through every part of it he has wandered with delight for forty years and more, and to describe it has been a labor of love.

To picture the scenes and scenery of the Holy Land, and to portray the manners and customs of the present inhabitants that illustrate the Bible, is the main object of this work. But to do that aright one must have seen and felt them; and this the author has done through many years of vicissitude and adventure, and whatever of life and truthfulness there may be in his pen-pictures is due to that fact. Where he has been he proposes to guide his reader, through that "good land" of mountain and vale and lake and river: to the shepherd's tent, the peasant's hut, the palace of kings, the hermit's cave, the temple of the gods—to the haunts of the living and the sepulchres of the dead—to muse on what *has been* and converse with what *is*, and learn from all what they teach concerning the oracles of God. A large part of these pages was actually written in the open country. On sea-shore or sacred lake, on hill-side or mountain-top, under the olive or the oak, or the shadow of a great rock—there the author lived, thought, and wrote; and place and circumstance have, no doubt, given color and character to many parts of the work.

The Bible, at once his guide, pattern, and text, is pervaded with the air of rural life; and He who came from heaven to earth for man's redemption loved the country, not the city. To the wilderness and the mountain He retired to meditate and pray. Thither He led His disciples and the listening multitudes; and from seed-time and harvest, and flocks and shepherds, and birds and flowers, He drew His sweetest lessons of instruction. In that identical land, amidst the same scenes, has the author of this work earnestly sought communion and intimate relationship with that Divine Teacher, and with the external and internal life of the Book of God; and what he has found and felt he has tried to trace upon the silent page for other eyes to see and other hearts to enjoy.

The interest in Biblical studies has greatly increased in modern times, and any work designed to meet the wants of those who now daily search the Scriptures should abound in illustrations, both textual and pictorial, which are reliable and accurate, and the information imparted must be brought down to the present day. No effort has been spared which was found necessary to secure these important results. The pictorial illustrations have been prepared specially for this work from photographs taken by the author, and from the best existing materials, and they were drawn and engraved, under his superintendence, by artists in London, Paris, and New York. The thanks of the author are due to his Publishers for the liberal manner in which this most costly part of the work has been executed.

The author has been careful to confirm his own knowledge of the land by reference to standard works, to the trustworthy reports of residents, and the valuable accounts of tourists. He has derived special assistance from the published records of the Palestine Exploration Fund, whose survey, now completed, has given to the Christian world a description and a map of the Holy Land more detailed, accurate, and scientific than has ever before been attempted.

Great attention has been bestowed upon the spelling of proper names, and all who have any knowledge of the subject will appreciate its importance. The system adopted for this work is that of Dr. Edward Robinson, drawn up by himself and his fellow-traveller, Dr. Eli Smith, and submitted to the Syrian Mission. After careful examination, in which the author participated, it was adopted by the Mission; and has been accepted by the Palestine Exploration Fund and the American Exploration Society, by recent writers, and in guide-books to the Holy Land. In addition to the Biblical names, the present Arabic names of places are added in all important cases. The work is also supplied with two carefully prepared indexes—one of texts, and the other of names and subjects. The attention of the reader is directed to them, as they will facilitate reference to those parts of the work where the Scripture passages illustrated, and the subjects treated of, are to be found.

W. M. T.

CONTENTS.

I.

JERUSALEM TO BETHLEHEM.

Site of the Ascension.—Buildings erected by Princesse Latour d'Auvergne.—Tombs of the Prophets.—Mount of Offence.—Bethphage.—Kefr Silwân, Village of Siloam.—Jerusalem the City of Solomon.—Proverbs of Solomon.—Oriental Proverbs, Ancient and Modern.—Contrast and Resemblance between Hebrew and Arabic Proverbs.—Moral Condition of Jerusalem indicated by the Proverbs of Solomon.—Departure from Jerusalem.—Butm, Terebinth.—Lifta, Nephtoah.—Chasm in the Rock explored by Captain Warren.—Deir el Musŭllabeh, Convent of the Cross.—Maundrell.—Valley of the Giants, Plain of Rephaim.—Battle-field between David and the Philistines.—"The Mulberry-trees."—Deir Mâr Eliâs.—Kubbet Râhîl, Rachel's Sepulchre.—Rachel not buried in Machpelah.—Anointing of Saul by Samuel.—"Rachel weeping for her Children in Ramah."—Ramah in the Coasts of Bethlehem.—Ephrath, Bethlehem.—David's Well.—Journey of the Holy Family to Bethlehem.—"Decree from Cæsar Augustus that all the World should be Taxed."—Church of St. Mary, and the Convents connected with it.—Grotto of the Nativity, and the Sacred Sites within it.—Tombs of Eusebius and Jerome.—The Inn and the Manger.—The Khân and the Manzûl.—Pilgrimages to Sacred Sites Modern, not Biblical.—The Wise Men from the East.—The Levite of Bethlehem, and Micah's House of Gods.—Laish, Dan.—Apostasy of the Danites.—Destruction of the Tribe of Benjamin.—Ruth the Moabitess.—Josephus, and the History of Ruth.—Naomi and Ruth.—Gleaners at Bethlehem.—Boaz and Ruth.—Salutations, Ancient and Modern.—Parched Corn.—Plucking Ears of Wheat by the Way-side.—Sleeping at the Threshing-floor.—The Veil.—Plucking off the Shoe.—Facility of Oriental Divorce.—Spitting upon a Person or Thing . Page 5

II.

BETHLEHEM TO EL BÎREH.

Beit Sâhûr, the Shepherds' Fields.—Shepherds' Grotto.—Wilderness of Judah frequented by Shepherds.—David and Eliab.—The Fields of Boaz.—Bethlehem and its Inhabitants.—Protestant Schools.—Moslem Quarter destroyed by Ibrahim Pasha.—Manufacture of Religious Relics.—Women of Bethlehem.—Bethlehem the City of David.—

9422

Psalms of David.—David and Achish.—City of Adullam.—Cave of Adullam.—Terebinth-tree in the Valley of Elah.—Beit Jâla.—Taxes and Taxation, Ancient and Modern.—Wady el Werd.—Distillation of Rose-water in Jerusalem.—Legend of the Rose.—Wady Bittîr, Site of Bether.—Bar-cochaba.—Rebellion of the Jews under Hadrian.—'Ain el Hanîyeh, St. Philip's Fountain.—Baptism of the Eunuch.—'Ain Kârim, City of Zacharias.—Yŭtta, Juttah.—St. John in the Wilderness.—Visit of Mary to Elisabeth.—Church of St. John.—Kŭlônieh not Emmaus.—Wady Beit Hanîna.—El Kŭstŭl, Castellum.—Boundary of Judah.—Sôba, Zuph.—Kuryet el 'Enab, Kirjath-jearim.—Abu Gaush.—The Ark brought to Kirjath-jearim.—Gibeah, "the Hill."—Sacred Retreats on Hill-tops.—Baalah.—House of Aminadab.—Hebrew Y'ar and Arabic W'ar.—Church of St. Jeremiah.—Omnibus from Jerusalem to Jaffa.—Ancient Highways.—Modern Gibeonites.—Kefîr, Chephriah.—Night Adventure in the Time of Ibrahim Pasha.—Neby Samwîl not Mizpeh.—Ramah of Benjamin.—The Prophet Samuel.—Extensive View from the Minaret of the Mosk.—Sepulchre of Samuel.—El Jîb, Gibeon.—El Balû'a, the Pool in Gibeon.—Abner.—Joab.—Amasa.—David's Instruction to Solomon concerning Joab.—The Tabernacle at Gibeon.—Solomon's Sacrifices, and his Choice of Wisdom.—The Treachery of Ishmael.—The Modern Village of El Jîb.—Large Caravan of Camels.—"The Way down to Beth-horon."—Upper and Lower Beth-horon.—Biblical Notices of Beth-horon.—Overthrow of the Amorites.—Command of Joshua to the Sun and Moon.—View of the Country around Beth-horon.—Merj Ibn 'Omeir, the Valley of Ajalon.—Yâlo, Ajalon.—Beit 'Ûr el Fôka, Upper Beth-horon.—Jeb'a, Gibeah of Saul.—Tuleil el Fûl, Mizpeh.—Scopus.—Josephus's Account of the Lot of Benjamin.—Er Râm, Ramah of Benjamin.—Deborah the Prophetess.—Biblical Allusions to Ramah.—View from the Ridge above Er Râm.—Reflections upon leaving Jerusalem and its Sacred Scenes . . . . Page 44

III.

EL BÎREH TO NÂBLUS.

Church and Khân at el Bîreh.—El Bîreh, Beeroth.—Biblical References to Beeroth.—Jotham's Parable.—The Murder of Ish-bosheth.—Illustrations of Manners and Customs, Ancient and Modern.—Character and Conduct of David.—Incident in the Life of Jesus.—Modern Village of el Bîreh.—The latter Rains.—Storm at el Bîreh.—Sennacherib's March towards Jerusalem.—The Wilderness eastward to the Jordan.—Mŭkhmâs, Michmash.—Invasion of the Philistines.—Oppression of the Children of Israel.—Disarmament of the People.—The Rocks Bozez and Seneh.—Exploit of Jonathan and his Armor-bearer.—Migron.—The Pomegranate-tree in Migron.—The Earthquake, the "trembling of God."—Defeat and Flight of the Philistines.—Beitîn, Beth-el.—Reservoir at Beitîn.—Ruins of a Tower and Church.—Burj Beitîn, Makhrûn.—The Malta Cross.—"The House of God and the Gate of Heaven."—Jacob's Dream at Bethel.—Luz.—Bethel an Ancient Religious Shrine.—Abraham and Jacob at Bethel.—Jeroboam and the Golden Calves.—Beth-aven, House of Vanity.—Abraham and Lot.—Khŭrbet Mŭkhatâr, Ruins of a Greek Church.—The Site of Ai.—Sheibân el Aye.—The Ambush sent by Joshua.—Wady es Suweinît.—Et Tell the probable Site of Ai.—The Man of Luz.—Luzah on Mount Gerizim.—Bethel after the

Days of the Patriarchs.—Elisha and the Children of Bethel.—"Nearer, my God, to thee."—Extensive Outlook from the Hills of Ephraim.—The Lot of Ephraim.—Destruction of Forests, Ancient and Modern.—Râm Allah.—Jufna, Gophna.—'Ain Yebrûd.—Primitive Travelling in the Holy Land.—The Barren Fig-tree.—Culture of the Fig and the Olive.—'Ain el Harâmîyeh.—Wady el Belât.—Sinjil.—Jiljîlia, Gilgal.—Elijah and Elisha.—Turmus 'Âya, Site of the Tabernacle.—Seilûn, Shiloh.—Jami'a ed Dâim.—Balûtat Ibrahîm.—Jami'a el Arb'ain.—Ruins at Seilûn.—Major Wilson's Description of the Site of the Tabernacle.—Gathering of the Tribes.—"The Daughters of Shiloh," and the Sabine Women.—The Story of Hannah and Samuel.—Leah's Mandrakes.—Khân el Lubbân, Lebonah.—Rŭmmon, the Rock Rimmon.—Deir Duwân.—Et Taiyibeh, Ophrah.—Ephraim of the New Testament.—Khân es Sawaieh.—Picturesque Mountain Terraces.—Plain of el Mŭkhna.—"Fields White to Harvest" . . . . Page 83

IV.

SAMARIA AND THE SAMARITANS.—SHECHEM.

Ride to Samaria.—Picturesque Road.—Beauty and Fertility of the Country.—The Vale of Nâblus.—Delight of Orientals in Abundance of Water.—Scenes and Scenery.—An Arab Writer's Estimation of the People of Nâblus.—"The Hill, Samaria."—Outlook from the Top of the Hill.—"Samaria as a Heap of the Field."—Site of Samaria.—Water abundant in the Neighborhood.—Access to the City from the East.—"Ahab, King of Israel, and Jehoshaphat, King of Judah."—The Void Place, the Summer Threshing-floor.—Samaria named after the Man who owned the Hill.—Biblical History of Samaria, and Extent of its Territory.—Captivity of Israel.—Elijah and Elisha.—Foreign Inhabitants of Samaria, and their Strange Religion.—The Priest of Bethel.—Ezra and Nehemiah reject the Samaritans.—Reception of the Samaritans by Alexander the Great.—Samaria in the Time of the Romans.—Herod the Great adorns the City with Public Buildings.—Sebaste, Augusta.—Group of Columns on the Top of the Hill.—The Street of Columns.—Group of Columns on the Hill-side.—Church of St. John the Baptist.—Crosses of the Order of St. John.—Neby Yehya.—The Tomb of the Baptist.—John beheaded at Machærus.—Temple and House of Baal.—Naaman the Syrian.—Lepers and Leprosy.—Charey-yonim.—Samaria in the Time of Christ.—Perpetual Hatred between Jew and Samaritan.—The Apostles preach in Samaria.—Samaria nominally Christian.—The Fatal Upas of Islam.—Ride from Samaria to the Summit of Gerizim.—Melchizedek, Abraham, Isaac.—Dean Stanley's Argument in Favor of Gerizim.—The Altar on Moriah.—The Sacrifice of Isaac not on Gerizim.—Major Wilson's Description of the Ruins on Gerizim.—The Castle.—The Church.—The Holy Place of the Samaritans.—"The Twelve Stones."—The Samaritan Temple.—Khŭrbet Louzah, Luz.—Josephus's Account of the Samaritan Temple, and its Destruction by Hyrcanus.—The Samaritans worshipping at the Ruins in the Time of Christ.—Observance of the Great Feasts by the Modern Samaritans.—History of the Ancient and Modern Samaritans.—The Samaritan Pentateuch.—Nâblus, Shechem.—Biblical References to Shechem.—The Oak of Moreh.—The Convocation of the Tribes at Shechem.—"The Blessings and Cursings" on Gerizim and Ebal.—The Law written on the Stones at Mount Ebal.—Joseph buried at Shechem.—Shechem a City of Refuge.—Jotham's Parable.—Nâblus, Neapolis . . . . Page 109

V.

NÂBLUS TO ZER'ÎN.

Nâblus, the Modern Town.—Description of the Streets by Miss Rogers.—Absence of Ancient Remains.—Soap Factories.—Commerce and Population of Nâblus.—Number of Samaritans.—Future of Nâblus.—Barracks at 'Ain Defneh.—The Gold Cave.—'Askar, Sychar.—"The Woman of Samaria."—Lieutenant Conder on the Site of Sychar.—Joseph's Tomb.—Jacob's Well.—Captain Anderson's Description of the Well.—Depth of the Well.—Belâta.—The Well Dug by Jacob.—Ancient Church over the Well.—Identification of the Well.—Jesus at Jacob's Well.—The Season when he Rested there.—Nâblus to Jezreel.—Ebal and Gerizim contrasted.—"The Cursing" pronounced on Ebal.—El Kenîseh.—Outlook from the Top of Ebal.—Shalem.—Enon.—Tŭllûza, Tirzah.—Wady Fâri'a to ed Dâmieh.—The Jordan twenty-five hundred Feet below Nâblus.—Flight of Benhadad's Army from Samaria.—Expedition of the Israelites against Ramoth-gilead.—Troops crossing the Jordan.—Width of the Ghôr at the Dâmieh Ford.—Banks and Bluffs of the Jordan Valley.—"The Swelling of Jordan."—Valley of the Jordan deserted.—Arid Nature of the Ghôr from Dâmieh to Jericho.—Description of Jericho and "the Great Plain" by Josephus.—Healing of the Waters by Elisha.—The Palm and the Balsam in the Plain of Jericho.—John baptizing in the Wilderness of Judea.—The Jordan not Visible from the Upper Ghôr.—Lieutenant Conder's Identification of the Altar of Ed.—Ed Dâmieh, "the City Adam."—Van de Velde.—Adam and Zarthan.—Roman Bridge at ed Dâmieh.—Parable of the Mustard-seed.—Probable Site of Succoth.—Fords of the Jordan.—Jisr el Mejâmi'a.—Tûbâs, Thebez.—Death of Abimelech.—Jeb'a, Geba.—The District of Samaria Fruitful and Populous.—Sânûr, Bethulieh.—Sânûr besieged by Abd Allah Pasha.—The Drowned Meadow.—Jerba.—Kŭbâtîyeh.—Plain of Esdraelon.—Beit 'Abd el Hady and Beit Jerrâr.—Turbulent District.—Civil War in er Rôhâh, and on Lebanon.—Tell Dothân, Dothan.—Description of the Tell, the Cisterns and Pits.—Joseph at Shechem and Dothan.—Cruelty of Joseph's Brethren.—Balm of Gilead.—Elisha at Dothan and Samaria.—Haunted Trees.—Wady Bel'amy.—Jenîn, En-gannim.—Distant Source of the Kishon.—Biblical References to En-gannim.—Jenîn to Zer'în.—Kefr Kûd, Caporcotia.—Jelbôn, Gilboa.—Death of Saul and Jonathan.—Dew and Rain on Gilboa.—Burdens of Prophecy.—Esdraelon.—Zer'în, Jezreel 142

VI.

ZER'ÎN TO HAIFA.

Zer'în, Jezreel.—Biblical Sites and Scenes around Zer'în.—'Ain Jâlûd, Fountain of Jezreel, and the Well of Harod.—Trial of Gideon's Army at the Water of Jezreel.—Camp of Gideon and that of the Midianites.—Invasions of the Ishmaelites, Ancient and Modern.—Ophrah.—Threshing Wheat by the Wine-press in the Vineyard.—Baal-worship in the Time of Gideon.— Daring Exploits of Gideon.— Gideon's Army of Thirty-two Thousand reduced to Three Hundred.—The Midianite dreams of a Cake of Barley-bread.—Josephus's Version of the Dream.—Gideon's Stratagem of Trumpets, and Lamps in Pitchers.—Dismay and Destruction of the Midianite Host.—Pursuit of the Midianites by the surrounding Tribes of Israel.—Onset of Gideon before the Dawn similar to that of the Bedawîn.—Gold Ear-rings of the Midianites.—Shŭttah, Beth-shittah.—Beth-barah.—Bethabara.—John the Baptist.—The Patriarch Jacob.—Abel-meholah.—"Elisha ploughing, with Twelve Yoke of Oxen before him."—Camp of Saul and that of the Philistines.—'Ain Jâlûd and the Fountain of Goliath.—The Watch-tower of Jezreel.—Jehu and his Company.—Death of Joram and Amaziah.—Tragic Fate of Jezebel.—Naboth's Vineyard.—Ferocious Dogs at Jezreel.—Ancient and Modern Custom of Painting the Eye.—Jezreel, God will sow.—The Valley of Achar, the Door of Hope.—Valley of Jezreel.—Tell Hŭsn at Beisân.—Miry Road between Zer'în and Beisân.—From Tiberias to Beisân.—Village of Beisân.—Beth-shean.—The Water Supply.—The Acropolis, and its Wall and Gate.—Walls and Fortifications of the City. —Khân el Ahmar.—Nŭbk-trees at Neby Habîb.—Property left in the Protection of the Neby.— Biblical History of Beth-shean.— Scythopolis.— Beisân, Beth-shean.— Scythopolis a City of Temples and Public Edifices.—Lieutenant Conder's Description of the Roman Ruins and Rock-cut Tombs.—The Theatre.—The Hippodrome.—The Tombs.—Dr. Robinson's Description of the Roman Arch over the Jâlûd.—Natural Advantages of Beisân.—Tŭbŭkat Fahel, Pella.—Road from Zer'în to Sôlam.—Jebel ed Dŭhy, Little Hermon.—Biblical Allusions to Tabor and Hermon.—Luxury of Oriental Travel, and Scenes along the Highways.—Village of Sôlam.—Sôlam, Shunem.— Biblical Notices of Shunem.—Elijah and Elisha.—The Good Shunamite.—The Shunamite's Son raised to Life.—Confiscation of Property.—The Wild Gourd.—Jebel ed Dŭhy not a Crater.—Basaltic Bowlders on the Road to Endôr.—Visit of Saul to the Witch of Endor.— Expedition of the Patriarchs and Bedawîn in the Preparation of Special Repasts.—Nein, Nain.—Jesus restores the Widow's Son to Life.—El Fûleh, Castle of Faba. —'Afûleh. — Battle of Mount Tabor. — Defeat of the Turks by the French. — Desolation of Esdraelon by the Bedawîn. — Merj Ibn 'Amîr, the Plain of Esdraelon.—The Battle-field of Palestine.—The Kishon.—Water-shed of the Plain.— Taannach and Megiddo.— Lejjûn, Legio.— Lieutenant Conder's Identification of Mejedd'a.—Biblical References to Megiddo.—The Waters of Megiddo.—Armageddon. —Battle-field of Barak.—Tell el Mutsellim.—Tell Ta'annûk.—Description of the Battle and Flight of the Canaanites.—Harosheth of the Gentiles.—Heber the Kenite.— Death of Sisera at the Hand of Jael.—Deborah's Triumphal Song.—The Nail or Tent-pin.—The Mother of Sisera.—Deborah.—Remarkable Trees.—Sites on the Northern Border of Esdraelon.—Depopulation of Villages.—Tell el Kŭssîs.—Apostasy of Israel. —Ahab, Obadiah, Elijah.—Priests of Baal.—Elijah's Sacrifice on Carmel.—Slaughter of the Priests of Baal.—Elijah prays for Rain.—Vespasian at el Muhrakah, the Place of Sacrifice.—Supply of Water for Elijah's Sacrifice.—Elijah runneth before the Chariot of Ahab.—The Place where Ahab met Elijah.—The Three Years' Drouth.—Pass of the Kishon from Esdraelon to the Plain of Acre.—'Ain es Sa'adîyeh, the Permanent Source of the Kishon.—The Sea at Haifa . . . . Page 176

VII.

HAIFA TO ACRE.

Haifa.—German Colony.—Population of Haifa.—Haifa el 'Atîkah.—Sycaminum.—Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake and Lieutenant Conder suggest Tell es Semak.—Tancred.—Ascent of Carmel.—Mount Carmel, Jebel Mâr Elyâs.—Biblical Allusions to Carmel.—Convent on Carmel.—Dr. Robinson's Resumé of its Early History.—Padre Giovanni Battista.—Carmelite Monks.—View from the Dome of the Convent.—Haifa to Acre.—Palm-grove.—Insecurity of the Roadstead of Haifa.—Crossing the Kishon.—Mr. MacGregor in his Canoe "Rob Roy."—Sandy Beach around the Head of the Bay of Acre.—Biblical Allusions to Robbers.—Nahr en N'amân, the Belus.—Pliny's Lake Cendevia.—Discovery of Glass.—Turon.—Approach to Acre.—Biblical and Historical Notices of Acre.—The Border of Asher.—Josephus's Description of the Boundary of Asher.—The Lot of Zebulun.—Zidon.—Phœnicia.—Acre during the Christian Era.—The Knights of St. John.—St. Jean d'Acre.—Reland's "Palestine" and Robinson's "Researches."—Ibrahim Pasha.—The British Fleet.—Fortifications of Acre.—Dr. Kitto.—Vaults under the Houses of Acre.—Biblical Allusions to Summer and Winter Houses.—El Behajeh.—Suburbs of Acre.—The Inhabitants of Acre.—'Amkah, Beth-emek.—Kŭl'at Jedîn, Castellum Indi.—W'ar.—Kabîreh.—Reservoirs.—Aqueducts to Acre, Ancient and Modern.—Old Quarries.—Jabal, Father of Tent-dwellers.—Khurbet esh Shwoizerîyeh.—Column of Hŭmsîn.—El Bŭssah.—'Ammarîyeh.—Ancient Ruins.—Kŭl'at Kureîn, Montfort.—The Cony.—Biblical References to the Cony.—The Hebrew Shaphan.—Honey out of the Rock.—Meat of John the Baptist.—M'alia.—Tershîha.—'Alia.—Semâdy, Female Head-dress of Silver Coins.—Sheîkh 'Aly el Mughraby, a Moslem Reformer.—Domestic Life of the Natives.—"A Continual Dropping, and a Contentious Woman."—Eliphaz the Temanite.—References to Natural Phenomena by Moses.—"The Ointment of his Right Hand."—'Alma.—Cities standing on their Tells.—Stationary and Roving Bedawîn.—Peasant Arabs.—"The Nature of Cleanliness."—"To your Tents, O Israel!"—Modern Custom of living in Tents.—Route from Acre to Tyre.—Râs el 'Ain.—Râs el Abyad, Promontorium Album.—Kŭl'at esh Shem'a.—Alexandroschene.—Um el 'Amed.—St. Helena's Tower.—Râs en Nakûrah, Scala Tyriorum.—Râs el Musheîrifeh.—Burj el Musheîrifeh.—Misrephoth-maim.—Petrified Star-fish.—Achzib, Ez Zîb.—Palm-trees and Beehives.—El Mezra'ah . . . . Page 235

VIII.

ACRE TO NAZARETH.

Different Routes from Acre to Nazareth.—Bethlehem.—Simonias.—The Bible and the Country.—Galilee the Earthly Home of the God-Man.—Veneration due to Sacred Shrines.—Modern Superstitions derived from Ancient Customs.—The Bones of Elisha reviving a Dead Man.—"Those Holy Fields."—Tell Birweh.—Watering with the Foot.—Villages in Wady Sha'ab.—Mejdel Kerûm.—Gabera.—Deir el As'ad.—El Ba'ineh.—Nuhf.—Seijûr.—The East the Land of Sheep in Ancient and in Modern

Times.—Resemblance of Modern Shepherds to those of the Patriarchs.—Passage of Vast Flocks from the North through the Land.—The Ride from er Râmeh to Meirôn.—Natural Beauty of "the Lot of Naphtali."—Olive-trees attacked by Locusts.—El Ferrâdy.—Kefr 'Anân.—Khŭrbet Hâzûr.—Ancient Sites.—View over the Sea of Galilee and the Hills of Naphtali.—Wady Leîmôn.—Road from er Râmeh to el Mŭghâr.—Bedawîn Shepherds in Wady Sellâmeh.—Visit to a Friend at el Mŭghâr.—Farming of Villages.—Results of Agricultural Enterprise.—Olive-trees surrounded by Thorny Jungles.—Taxation.—Rameh of Naphtali.—En-hazor.—Khŭrbet Sellâmeh, Selamis.—Wady er Rŭbŭdîyeh.—'Arrabeh.—Deir Hanna.—Sŭkhnîn, Sogane.—Yâkûk, Hukkok.—Wŭkala, or Agents, in the Time of David and Solomon, and those of the Present Day.—Storehouses in the Fields.—Ruinous System of Taxation.—Laws of Moses regarding Vicious Oxen.—Mosaic Legislation commended by Josephus.—Uncovered Pits.—Solomon's Rebuke of the Sluggard.—The Ant and the Overseer.—The Ant and the Improvident.—Herodotus and the Ants in India.—Proverbs of Solomon regarding the Slothful.—Arab Illustration of Laziness.—"The Vineyard of the Man void of Understanding."—Manufacture of Olive-oil, Ancient and Modern.—Treading the Olives.—Blight and Mildew believed to be Divine Judgments.—Physical Features of the Land of Canaan adapted to the Purposes of Divine Revelation.—Cutting up Mallows by the Bushes.—The Hebrew Malluach.—"The Axe laid unto the Root of the Trees."—"The Grass of the Field cast into the Oven."—Burning of Thorns and Briers.—Kindling Fire near Wheat-fields.—Firing Wheat-fields punished with Death by the Bedawîn.—Kabûl, Chabolo.—One of the "twenty Cities" given to Hiram.—Jefât, Jotapata.—Besieged by Vespasian.—Capture of Josephus.—Burning of Locusts.—The Scourge of Locusts.—Biblical Allusions to Locusts.—"Locusts and Wild Honey" the Meat of John the Baptist.—'Abilîn.—Wady 'Abilîn, Jiphthah-el.—Oak Woods.—Shefa 'Omar.—Plain of el Bŭttauf.—Rŭmmâneh, Rimmon.—Khŭrbet Kâna, Cana of Galilee.—Nathanael, "an Israelite indeed."—Jesus at Cana of Galilee.—Villages around el Bŭttauf.—Beehives.—Offering of "First Fruits."—Seffûrieh, Sepphoris.—Joachim and Anna.—Church of the Virgin.—Castle at Seffûrieh.—From Seffûrieh to Nazareth . . . . Page 269

IX.

FROM NAZARETH TO TIBERIAS.

Nazareth from the North.—The Home of Mary and "the Child Jesus."—Nazareth not mentioned in the Old Testament.—History of Nazareth.—Maundrell.—Napoleon Bonaparte.—Sir Sidney Smith.—Modern Nazareth.—English Church and Orphanage.—Jesus in Nazareth.—Gospels of the Infancy.—Sites and Shrines.—Nazareth in the Time of Jesus.—"He shall be called a Nazarene."—"Jesus of Nazareth."—Nazarites.—Early Mass.—Mount of Precipitation.—Girls of Nazareth.—Church of the Annunciation.—The Holy Grotto.—House and Chapel of Joseph.—"Mensa Christi."—Synagogue.—House of the Virgin and the Santa Casa at Loretto.—Deceptions and Fictions.—Outlook from Neby Isma'îl.—Fountain of the Virgin.—Greek Church of the Annunciation.—The Good that did come out of Nazareth.—Nazareth to Tabor.—Debûrieh, Daberath.—Mount Tabor.—View from Tabor.—Ruins on the Summit of

Tabor.—Scripture References to Tabor.—Tabor and Hermon.—The Net spread upon Tabor.—The Transfiguration.—Oak Woods.—Khân et Tujjâr.—Fair.—Villages between Khân et Tujjâr and Jisr el Mejâmi'a.—Castle of Belvoir.—Depression of the Jordan Valley.—Adventure with a Fahd at the Camp of 'Akîl Aga.—The Hunting Panther.—A Present to the Emperor.—Lieutenant Lynch describes 'Akîl Aga.—David's Allusion to the Lion.—Jisr Um el Kanâtir.—View of Lake Tiberias.—Tarichæa.—Sea-fight between the Jews and Romans.—Storm on the Lake.—Excursion to Gadara.—Men, Women, Children, and Flocks fording the Jordan.—Jisr el Mejâmi'a.—Gorge of the Jarmuk.—Hot Springs of el Hummah.—The Jarmuk, the Heiromax.—Um Keis, Gadara.—The City of the Dead.—Gadarites.—Demoniacs and Swine.—Outgo of the Jordan.—Shooting the Rapids.—Aqueduct in Wady Fadjâs.—Ruined Sugar-mill.—Drought before Harvest.—Ammaus, Hammath.—Hot Baths of Tiberias.—"The Mules in the Wilderness."—Dawn over the Lake.—The Sea of Galilee associated with Christ.—Tiberias mentioned only by John.—The City of Tiberias not visited by Christ.—Josephus's Account of Tiberias.—Ruins of an Ancient City.—Tiberias the Seat of Rabbinical Learning.—Modern Tiberias.—The Lake of Tiberias.—Ships and Fishermen on the Lake.—The Apostles chosen from amongst Fishermen.—Modes of Fishing.—Fishing by Torch-light.—Simon Peter and the Fisher's Coat . . . . Page 310

X.

TIBERIAS.

Excursion to the Eastern Shore of the Lake.—Native Boat.—Storms on the Lake in the Time of Christ and at the Present Day.—"Ships."—Wady es Semak.—Castle of Baldwin.—Gersa, Gergesa.—Gadara not Gergesa.—Country of the Gadarenes.—The Demoniacs and the Herd of Swine.—Wild-boars.—Raising Swine.—Dangers of Boar-hunting.—Biblical Allusions to Swine.—Jesus in the Coasts of Decapolis.—"The Ten Cities."—Geological Characteristics of the Region east of the Lake.—The Jaulân.—Bedawîn Robbers.—Covenant of "Brotherhood," and of "Bread and Salt."—Salt that has "lost his Savour."—Native Dealer in Salt.—Salt Marshes near Larnaca, and Salt Lake at Jebbûl.—Rock-salt on the Shore of the Dead Sea.—The Profession of Robber.—Character of the Bedawîn.—Gamala.—Account of the Siege and Capture of Gamala by Josephus.—Description of the Site and Ruins of Gamala.—Wind-storms.—Predictions concerning the Destruction of the Jews.—Belief in the Existence of Hid Treasure.—Fîk, Aphek.—Destruction of Benhadad's Army.—Argob.—Kefr Hârib.—Khŭrbet es Sŭmrah.—Es Semakh, Hippos.—Pebbly Beach.—The Past, Present, and Future of the Lake.—The Life and Works of Christ associated with the Lake and its Surroundings.—The Apostles chosen from the Craft of Fishermen.—Boat on the Lake.—The Fish of the Lake, and the Miracles of Christ.—Church of St. Peter.—Services in the Church.—Reflections suggested by the Lake and its Shores.—The Natural Basis of the Teachings of Christ.—The Roman Taxgatherer.—"Render unto Cæsar the Things which are Cæsar's."—The Tribute-money.—"A City set on a Hill."—Manners and Customs alluded to by Jesus illustrated by those of the Present Day.—A Jew of the Olden and Modern Time.—Christ the Model Man.—Mercenary Character of Orientals.—Unmercenary Nature of Christ's Kingdom.—Missionary Experience.—Worldliness in Religion.—Dr. Chalmers.—Christ's Kingdom not Temporal.—Perversion of Religion for Temporal Advantage.—Protection of Religious Sects by European Nations.—The Hebrew Commonwealth.—The Divine Kingdom of Truth.—Disregard of Truth by Orientals.—Isaiah's Reference to the Ox and the Ass.—The Donkey.—Swarm of Gnats.—Biblical Allusions to Gnats and Fleas.—The Arabs and the Fleas.—The Centipede . . . . Page 350

XI.

TIBERIAS TO 'AIN ET TÎNY.

Tiberias to 'Ain et Tîny.—View from the Rocky Promontory North of Tiberias.—Plain of el Fulîyeh.—'Ain el Barîdeh.—Shoals of Fish.—Reservoirs at el Fulîyeh.—Feeding of the Five Thousand.—Scientific Exploration of the Lake of Tiberias.—M. Lortet.—Chromis, and other Varieties of Fish.—Canon Tristram.—Fishing with Poisoned Bait.—El Mejdel, Magdala.—Magadan.—Mary Magdalene.—Parable of the Wheat and the Tares.—The Transmutation of Wheat into Tares.—Wady el Hamâm.—Kul'at Ibn Ma'an.—Robbers' Caves.—Capture of the Robbers by Herod the Great.—Burckhardt.—Colonel Wilson's Description of the Caverns.—Cliffs above Wady Hamâm.—Irbid, Arbela.—Beth-arbel.—Fanaticism of the Jews in the Time of Christ.—Ruined Synagogue at Irbid Described by Colonel Wilson.—Kŭrûn Hattîn.—Mount of the Beatitudes.—Feeding of the Five Thousand.—Hejâr en Nŭsâra.—Mensa Christi.—Outlook from the Summit of Kŭrûn Hattîn.—Lûbieh.—Battle of Hattîn.—Hattîn.—Neby Shû'eib.—Pilgrimages to Saints' Tombs.—Cultivating distant Fields.—The Scrip, or Wallet.—Charge of Christ to his Apostles.—"Salute no Man by the Way."—"Go not from House to House."—The Plain of Gennesaret well Watered.—'Ain el Hamâm.—'Ain el Mŭdŭawarah.—The Coracinus.—Dr. Robinson's Description of 'Ain el Mŭdaŭwarah.—Wady er Rŭbŭdîyeh.—Dr. Merrill.—Wady el 'Amud.—'Ain et Tîny.—'Ain et Tâbighah.—Josephus's Description of the Fertility of Gennesaret.—Gennesaret Fruitful in Thorns.—Harvest out of the Thorns.—Northern End of the Plain.—Petrified Cane and Wood.—Absence of Villages West of the Plain.—Yâkûk, Hukkok.—Nests of Field-sparrows.—Foxes and Birds of the Air.—Corroborations of the Gospel Narratives.—'Ain et Tîny.—Papyrus.—Khân Minyeh.—'Ain et Tîny to Tell Hûm, and the Site of Bethsaida.—Places of Interest connected with Christ's Ministry.—Rock-cut Canal.—'Ain et Tâbighah, the Fountain of Capharnaum, the Rock-cut Canal Described by Colonel Wilson and Lieutenant Kitchner.—'Ain et Tâbighah, the Fountain of Capharnaum.—Manufacturing Suburb of Capernaum.—'Ain et Tâbighah to Tell Hûm.—Ruins at Tell Hûm.—Synagogue and Church Described by Colonel Wilson.—House of Peter.—The Synagogue Built by the Roman Centurion.—The Bread of Life and the Pot of Manna.—"Exalted unto Heaven."—Charûl, Nettle.—Thorns and Thistles Cumbering Ruins.—Clumps of Oleander.—Tell Hûm to Kherâzeh.—Chorazin.—Ruins at Kherâzeh.—Et Tell, Bethsaida.—Mes'adîyeh, City of Andrew and Peter.—Battle of Josephus with the Romans near Capernaum.—Marshes Caused by Rivers in Palestine.—The Buffaloes.—Plain of el Batîhah.—Lodge in a Garden of Cucumbers.—Scare-crows in the Gardens.—Bethsaida Julias.—Royal Cities of Philip.—Evening Ride along the Sea of Galilee.—Poetic Description of that Sea by McCheyne.—Claims of Khân Minyeh and Tell Hûm.—'Ain et Tîny the Fountain of Capharnaum, according to Dr. Robinson.—'Ain et Tîny and 'Ain et Tâbighah, and the Fish Coracinus.—Khân Minyeh a Roman Government Station.—Not the Residence of Peter nor the City of Jesus.—The Receipt of Custom, and the Place where Jesus Sat at Meat.—Capernaum was probably not in the Plain of Gennesaret.—The Name Tell Hûm.—Tradition fixes Capernaum at Tell Hûm.—Peter's Wife's Mother.—Inlets along the Shore Associated with the Teachings of Jesus, and the Call of the Disciples . . . . Page 390

XII.

'AIN ET TÎNY TO BÂNIÂS.

Healing of the Paralytic.—Oriental Houses.—The Jaulân, Gaulanitis.—Sujân.—Shaik.—Summakah.—Joaiza.—Camp of Emîr el Fŭdle.—Slaves of the Emîr.—Eliezer of Damascus.—Bedawîn Steward.—Gathering of the Flocks.—Dogs of the Bedawîn.—The Man of Uz.—Drought by Day, and Frost by Night.—Volcanic Mounts in the Jaulân.—The Jaulân given up to Pasturage.—The Good Shepherd.—Kefr Neffakh.—Turkmân Camp.—Selukia.—Oak Woods.—Game in the Jaulân.—Kuneitirah.—Sâhm Jaulân, Golan.—Khŭrbet Saida.—Encampment of Sheikh Fareij.—Bedawîn Robbers.—Spear in Front of the Sheikh's Tent.—Spear and Cruse at Saul's Bolster.—Bedawîn Bride and her Outfit.—Evening with Sheikh Fareij.—The Inn of the Pit of Joseph.—Burckhardt.—The Tears of Jacob.—The Pit of Joseph.—Jacob and his Family.—Lieutenant Kitchner's Description of the Mukâm of Jacob's Daughters.—Volcanic Centres.—Origin of the Depression of the Jordan Valley.—Ridge between Hermon and Lebanon.—Obtrusion of Trap-rock in the Hûleh.—Upheaval South of the Dead Sea.—No Physical Change since Abraham.—Bridge of Jacob's Daughters.—Khân and Fountain.—Saul of Tarsus.—Crusading Castle.—The Jordan from the Hûleh to Lake Tiberias.—Plain of the Hûleh.—Shore of the Lake.—Game on the Hûleh.—The Pelican of the Wilderness.—The Papyrus.—Thistles and Wild Mustard.—Artificial Mounds.—'Ain el Mellâhah.—Fish in the Pool.—Marsh of the Hûleh.—Personal Incident.—Rooks and Crows.—Nests of Field-sparrows.—Camp of el Ghawârineh.—Making Butter.—Wringing the Nose.—"Consider the Lilies."—The Hûleh Lily.—Jisr el Ghŭjar and Nahr el Hasbâny.—Tell el Kâdy, Laish, Dan.—The Jordan Rising from a Crater.—Dean Stanley's Description of Dan.—Sheikh Daraik.—Hebrew Dan, and Arabic Kâdy.—The Jordan Emblematic of Life.—Passage of the Jordan by the Hebrews.—Buffaloes.—The Behemoth.—The Land of Uz.—The Family of Aram.—Hûleh, Hul.—Geshur, Gether.—Maacah, the Mother of Absalom.—Meis el Jebel, Mash.—Reem and Unicorn.—Urus.—Pharaoh's Lean Kine.—Junction of the Branches of the Jordan.—Difneh, Daphne.—The Golden Calf.—Fertility of the Hûleh.—Abundance of Bees.—Sealed Storehouses.—Seîyed Yehuda, Judah upon Jordan.—Tell el Kâdy to Bâniâs.—Oak Woods.—Cæsarea Philippi.—Panium.—Fountain of the Jordan 432

XIII.

BÂNIÂS TO KHÂN HÂSBEIYA.

Citadel of Bâniâs.—Ascent to Phiala.—The Sa'âreh.—Olive Groves.—'Ain Kŭnyeh.—Oak Wood.—Charcoal.—Plain of Yafûry.—Lake Phiala.—Frogs, Leeches, Hawks.—Extinct Crater.—Phiala and the Fountain at Bâniâs.—Circuit of the Lake.—Mejdel esh Shems.—Oak Grove of 'Othmân el Hâzûry.—High Places.—Ancient and Modern Superstitions.—The Oak and the Terebinth.—Oak Groves in Palestine.—Castle of Bâniâs.—Colonel Wilson and Lieutenant Kitchner.—Elevation of the Castle above the Village.—History of the Castle.—View over the Hûleh.—Scorpions.—Biblical References to Scorpions.—Canon Tristram.—Sting of the Scorpion.—Fountain of the Jordan.—Baal-Gad.—Temple of Pan.—Worship of Păn.—Description of the Temple and Fountain by Josephus.—Cæsarea Philippi.—Festival and Miracle at the Fountain.—Jesus "in the Coasts of Cesarea Philippi."—Statue of Christ.—"Thou art the Christ."—"Thou art Peter."—Seat of False Worship.—Nature's Morning Psalm.—Streamlets of the Upper Jordan.—Remains of Cæsarea Philippi.—Wady el 'Asal.—Village of el Ghŭjar.—Fountain of el Luweizâny.—The Nusairîyeh.—Dr. Robinson's Description of Kŭl'at Bustra.—Shib'a and Kefr Shûba.—Khureibeh.—Massacres of 1860.—Districts of Wady et Teim.—Rasheiyet el Fukhkhar.—Native Pottery.—Road along the Bank of the Hasbâny.—Ruin at Deir el Mŭtâleîh.—Outlook from the Deir.—Temple at Hibbârîyeh.—Ruins at Bâb el Hâd.—Khŭlwât el Biyâd.—Druse 'Ukkâl.—Religious Centre of the Druses.—Khlât Bey.—M. de Sacy.—Hâsbeiya.—Wady el Bŭsîs.—Ruins of Houses.—Massacre in the Palace at Hâsbeiya.—Bloody Tragedies in Biblical Times.—The Fountain of the Jordan.—Seil, or Cloud-burst.—Storms round Hermon.—Biblical Allusions to Storms.—School Festival.—Neb'a el Fauwâr to Khân Hâsbeiya.—Wady et Teim.—Captain Warren's Description of the Temples in that District.—Temple at 'Ain Hŭrsheh.—Temple at Thelthâtha.—Baal, the Sun-god.—Râsheiyet el Wady.—Massacre of Christians.—Temple at 'Aiha.—Kefr Kûk.—Temples at Rŭkhleh.—Eagle and Medallion at Rŭkhleh.—Baal and his Worship.—Human Sacrifices to Baal.—Moloch and his Worship.—Ascent of Hermon.—Bears.—Summit of Hermon.—Captain Warren's Description of the Ruins on the Southern Peak.—Snow on Hermon.—Greek Inscription.—View from the Summit of Hermon.—Hermon the most Conspicuous Mountain in the Holy Land.—Northern Limit of the Hebrew Possessions.—Biblical Allusions to Hermon.—The Dew of Hermon.—Scene of the Transfiguration . Page 468

XIV.

KHÂN HÂSBEIYA TO SAFED.

Khân Hâsbeiya.—Fortified Caravansaries.—Fair at Sûk el Khân.—Bitumen Wells.—Noah's Ark, the Tower of Babel, the Mother of Moses.—Merj 'Ayûn.—Fatal Windstorm.—The Derdârah.—Er Ruahîneh.—Tell Dibbîn, the City of Ijon.—Source of the Lîtâny.—Meshghûrah.—Gorge of the Lîtâny.—The Kŭweh, the Natural Bridge.—The Lapwings.—The Barada.—Conies.—Eagles.—Biblical Allusions to Eagles.—El Khŭtweh.—Leontes.—Orontes.—Cœle-Syria.—A Railroad to the Euphrates.—

Northern Boundary of the Promised Land.—The Arkites.—Asher and Zidon.—Judeideh.—Kŭl'at esh Shŭkîf.—Jezzar Pasha.—Ploughs and Ploughing.—A Midwinter Episode.—Count Schlieffen and his Party.—The Sultân's Firmân.—Bedawîn Toll.—Natives and Native Houses.—"Pray ye that your Flight be not in the Winter."—Abîl el Kamh, Abel of Beth-maachah.—A Man of Belial—A Mother in Israel.—A Wise Woman.—Joab.—Biblical History of Abel.—Abîl, the Modern Village.—The Maachathites and the Geshurites.—Hunîn.—Beth-rehob.—The Castle of Hunîn Described by Lieutenant Kitchner.—Summer Crops.—Early and Latter Rain.—"In the Morning sow thy Seed."—"The Ploughman shall Overtake the Reaper."—Reaping and Threshing.—The Hills of Naphtali.—View over the Hûleh.—The Basin of the Jordan.—Ard el Hûleh, Merom.—Battle-fields of the Bible.—The Father of the Faithful.—Slaughter of Chedorlaomer.—The Confederate Kings Routed by Joshua.—Capture of Laish by the Danites.—Dan to Beersheba.—The Golden Calf of Dan.—The Metâwileh.—Balak and Baalam.—Involuntary Entertainment by the Beg at Tibnîn.—Kŭl'at Dubbah Described by Lieutenant Kitchner.—Wady Hûleh.—The Seigniorât.—Meis el Jebel.—Village Pools.—The Plain of Zaanaim.—Heber the Kenite.—Jael and Sisera.—The Oak and the Terebinth.—The Pistachio-nut-tree.—Kedes, Kedesh Naphtali.—Biblical History of Kedesh.—Cydessa.—Tombs of Barak, Deborah, and Jael.—Ruins at Kedes Described by Lieutenant Kitchner.—Wady el Mu'addamîyeh.—"Fly as Doves to their Windows."—Biblical Allusions to Doves.—'Alma.—Native Tradition.—Wady Leimôn.—Treasure-trove.—Castle of Safed.—"A City set on a Hill."—View from the Castle.—Safed a Holy City of the Jews.—Caverns in the Cliffs.—The Leimôny an Intermittent Stream.—The Jews of Safed.—Pharisaic Regulations regarding the Sabbath.—"The Sabbath for Man, not Man for the Sabbath" . Page 524

XV.

SAFED TO TYRE.

Fanaticism of the Moslems at Safed.—Their Attack on Lieutenant Conder.—Their Heartlessness after the Earthquake.—Biblical Allusions to Earthquakes.—Earthquake at Safed in 1837.—"A Bowing Wall."—Earthquake at Tiberias.—"Earthquakes in Divers Places."—Moral Effects of Judgments.—Extinct Crater.—El Jish, Giscala.—Parents of the Apostle Paul.—Remains of Synagogues.—"The Abomination of Desolation."—Yârôn, Iron.—'Ain Ata, Bethanath.—Ruined Church.—Meirôn, Meiron.—Synagogue at Meirôn.—Tombs of Hillel and of Simeon.—Jewish Traditions.—Rock-cut Tombs.—Fête-day of Rabbi Simeon.—Jewish Pilgrimages to Meirôn Described by Lieutenant Kitchner.—Village of Meirôn.—Jebel Jermŭk.—'Ain el Jân.—Kefr Bir'im.—Tombs of Barak, Obadiah, and Esther.—Colonel Wilson's Description of the Synagogues at Kefr Bir'im.—The Pot of Manna.—The Paschal Lamb.—"Peace be to this House."—Mr. Spiers on Jewish Architecture.—Upper Galilee an Asylum for the Jews.—Wady Rumeish.—The Water-shed.—Geodes of Chalcedony.—Precious Stones not found in Palestine.—Appreciation of Gems by Orientals.—Rumeish.—Poison in Cheese.—Kûrah.—Broken Cisterns.—Tomb of Joshua.—Possible Site of Hazor.—Biblical History of Hazor.—El Khuraibeh.—Tell Harah.—Belâd Beshârah.—Wady el 'Ayûn.—Dilb, 'Ain Ibl, Kauzih.—Lieutenant Kitchner's Description of the Temple at Belât.—Belad Beshârah Inhabited by the Tribe of Asher.—Beit 'Aly es Sughîr.—Bint Jebeil.—The Metâwileh.—Laws of Moses concerning Things and Persons Unclean.—Dwellers without the Camp.—Case of an Old Woman at Jeba'a.—Metâwileh Women.—Fast of Ramadân.—Women Praying in Public.—The Bite of a Serpent.—"Honey out of the Rock."—The Sheepfold.—The Shepherd and the Sheep.—The Dogs of the Flock.—"He shall feed his Flock."—The Shepherd's Staff.—Kanah of Asher.—Um el 'Awamîd.—"He shall dip his Foot in Oil."—Ancient Oil-presses.—Phœnician Inscriptions discovered by Mr. Renan.—Baal, Moloch, Ashtaroth.—Sculptures at Kâna.—Wine-vat near the Site of Old Kanah.—Making of Wine prohibited.—The Wine-press a Biblical Symbol.—Tomb of Hiram.—Mosaic Pavement discovered by Mr. Renan.—Cultivation of Tobacco.—Coast of Tyre.—Râs el 'Ain.—Tell el Ma'shûk.—Roman Aqueduct.—Tell Habeish.—Er Rashîdîyeh . . . . . Page 567

XVI.

TYRE AND SIDON.

The Emporium of Phœnicia.—The Phœnicians.—The Great-grandsons of Noah.—The Sidonians.—The Giblites.—The Arkites.—The Zemarites.—The Arvadites.—The Sinites.—Jebeleh, Gabala.—Sea-board of Phœnicia.—The Phœnicians and the Hebrews.—Enterprise of the Phœnicians.—Their Colonies.—Interior Harbor of Tyre.—The Roadstead.—Personal Incident.—The Egyptian Harbor.—Lieutenant Kitchner's Description of the Cathedral at Tyre.—Consecration Speech of Eusebius.—Dr. Robinson's Topography of Insular Tyre.—Alexander's Causeway.—Ancient Stone in the Sea-wall.—Columns strewn beneath the Waves.—Remains of Ancient Tyre.—Its Water-supply.—Dip of the Rock Strata.—Tyrian Purple.—Founding of Tyre.—Palætyrus.—Biblical History of Tyre.—The Commerce of Tyre described by Ezekiel.—Tyre besieged by Nebuchadnezzar.—Tyrians dwelt in Jerusalem.—Tyre taken by Alexander the Great.—Tyre in the Time of Christ.—The Apostle Paul at Tyre.—Herod the King.—Tyre a Heap of Ruins.—The Burden of Prophecy.—Modern Tyre.—The Ancient Wall of Tyre.—Substructions built by Hiram described by Mr. Kenrick.—The Channel in the Time of William of Tyre.—Ruined Aqueduct.—Khân and Bridge at el Kâsimîyeh.—The Lîtâny.—The Delta.—Coast of Tyre and Sidon.—Abu el Aswâd.—Cloud-burst.—Mr. Holland's Experience in Wady Feirân.—Biblical References to Cloud-bursts.—Orinthonopolis.—Rock-cut Tombs at 'Adlan.—St. George.—Sarepta.—Guest-chamber.—The Widow of Sarepta and the Syro-Phœnician Woman.—'Ain el Kanterah.—Tell el Bûrak.—Ez Zaherâny.—Aqueduct of Sit Zebeideh.—Nahr es Senîk.—El Muntarah.—Roman Mile-stone.—Gardens of Sidon.—Personal Reminiscences.—Neby Kabarûh.—Coins of Philip and Alexander.—Search for Hid Treasure.—Mughârat Tublûn.—Sarcophagus of Ashmanezer.—Phœnician Inscription.—Gods of the Sidonians.—"Corn-lands at the Root of Dan."—The Duc de Luynes.—Phœnician and Hebrew Alphabet.—The Inner Harbor of Sidon.—Sea Castle.—The Old Wall.—Castle of St. Louis.—Broken Murex.—Ancient Remains in the Gardens of Sidon.—History of Sidon.—Sidon and Tyre.—Sidon mentioned in the Homeric Poems.—Destruction of Sidon.—The Apostle Paul in Sidon.—Sidon during the Crusades.—Emîr Fakhr ed Dîn.—Population of Sidon.—The Land and the Book . . 607

FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS.

Bethlehem—Beit Lahm . . . . Frontispiece
Gleaners of Bethlehem . . . . faces page 40
The Shepherds' Fields . . . . " 46
Gibeon—El Jîb . . . . " 72
Bethel—Beitîn . . . . " 92
Samaria—Sebŭstieh . . . . " 112
Shechem—Nâblus . . . . " 136
Jacob's Well—Bîr es Sâmairîyeh . . . . " 150
Banks and Bluffs of the Jordan . . . . } " 162
The Dâmieh Ford—Mukhâdat ed Dâmieh . . . . }
En-Gannim—Jenîn . . . . " 172
Beth-Shean—Beisân . . . . " 196
Plain of Esdraelon—Merj Ibn 'Amir . . . . " 208
Haifa and Carmel . . . . " 236
Acre—'Akka . . . . " 248
Shefa 'Omar . . . . " 302
Nazareth—En Nâsirah . . . . " 314
Mount Tabor—Jebel et Tûr . . . . " 326
Outgo of the Jordan from the Lake of Tiberias . . . . " 340
Tiberias—Tŭbarîyeh . . . . " 346
Magdala—El Mejdel . . . . " 394
Rock-cut Canal above 'Ain et Tîny . . . . } " 416
The Plain of Gennesaret . . . . }
Capernaum—Tell Hûm . . . . " 420

Laish, Dan—Tell el Kâdy . . . . faces page 458
Castle of Bâniâs—Kŭl'at es Subeibeh . . . . " 478
Source of the Jordan—Ras en Neb'a at Bâniâs . . . . . . " 480
Streamlets of the Upper Jordan . . . . " 484
Source of the Hasbâny—Neb'a el Fauwâr . . . . " 506
Ruined Temple at Thelthâtha . . . . } " 510
Mount Hermon—Jebel esh Sheikh . . . . }
The Jordan—El Hasbâny . . . . " 528
The Lîtâny above the Natural Bridge . . . . " 532
The Plain of Merom—Ard el Hûleh . . . . " 552
Kedesh—Kedes . . . . " 560
Tyre—Sûr . . . . " 628
Sidon—Saida . . . . " 640

MAP OF THE HOLY LAND, AND THE SEA-BOARD OF PHŒNICIA . . . . faces page 5
MAP OF THE LAKE OF TIBERIAS, OR SEA OF GALILEE " 372

ILLUSTRATIONS IN THE TEXT.

PAGE
Terebinth—El Butm 20
Rachel's Tomb—Kubbet Râhîl . . . 26
Interior of the Church of the Nativity. 33
City of Adullam—Butm Wady Sûr . . 49
Bether—Bittîr 54
St. Philip's Fountain—'Ain el Hanîyeh. 56
St. John in the Wilderness—'Ain Kârim 58
The Boundary of Judah . . . .
Castellum—El Kŭstŭl 60
Kirjath-Jearim—Kuryet el 'Enab . .
Church of St. Jeremiah 64
Ramah of Benjamin—Neby Samwîl . 69
Upper Beth-Horon—Beit 'Ûr el Fôka. 75
Beeroth—Ruined Church at el Bîreh . 87
Scene of Jonathan's Exploit . . .
Wady es Suweinît, near Mŭkhmâs . 90
Shiloh—Seilûn . . . .
Mosk of the Forty—Jâmi'a el Arba'în 103
Colonnade of Herod the Great . . . 117
Church of St. John—Neby Yehya . . 119
Plan of the Ruins on Mount Gerizim. 126
Ruins on Gerizim—The Twelve Stones. 128
Samaritan Pentateuch 135
Joseph's Tomb—Kabr Yûsuf 147
The Jordan Valley—Kŭrn Sŭrtabeh . 161
Jezreel—Zer'în 178
Fountain of Jezreel—'Ain Jalûd . . . 186
Painted Eyes and Eyebrows 188
Meel and Mŭkhŭly 189

PAGE
Shunem—Sôlam 199
Citrullus Colocynthis . . . . . .
Colocynth—Hundal 202
Nain—Nein 206
The Place of Sacrifice—El Mŭhrakah. 229
Convent on Carmel—Deir Mâr Elyâs . 240
Column of Hŭmsîn—'Amûd Hŭmsîn . 254
The Cony—El Waber 258
Ramah of Naphtali—Er Râmeh . . . 279
The Locusts—El Jerâd 298
Cana of Galilee—Khŭrbet Kâna . . . 304
Sepphoris—Seffûrieh 307
Church of the Virgin 308
Castle at Seffûrieh 309
Church of the Annunciation, and Fountain of the Virgin 323
Inn of the Merchants—Khân et Tujjâr. 328
'Akil Aga, and his Horse and Panther . 331
Gadara—Um Keis 337
Shooting the Rapids of the Jordan . . 339
Fishing-boat on the Sea of Galilee . . 374
The Centipede—Um Arba'a wa Arba'în 389
Tares—Zawân 396
Kŭl'at ibn Ma'an—Wady el Hamâm . 399
Ruins of Synagogue. Beth-arbel—Irbid 401
The Wallet or Scrip—El Jârâb . . . 405
'Ain et Tîny, near Khân Minyeh . . 412
'Ain et Tâbighah — Birket 'Aly edh Dhâher 414

PAGE
Plan of the Synagogue at Tell Hûm . 417
Ruins of the Synagogue at Tell Hûm . 418
Chorazin—Kherâzeh 422
Lodge in a Garden of Cucumbers . . 425
Native House on Lebanon 434
Bridge of Jacob's Daughters—Jisr Benât Ya'kôb 448
The Canoe "Rob Roy" on the Hûleh. 451
Judah upon Jordan—Seîyed Yehûda . . 466
Ancient Bridge, and Entrance to Bâniâs 470
Lake Phiala—Birket er Râm 472
Oak Grove of Sheikh 'Othmân el Hâzûry 475
The Scorpion—El 'Akrâbeh 479
Temple at Hibbârîyeh 497
Plan of the Temple at Hibbârîyeh . . 498
Hâsbeiya 501
Plan of the Temple at Thelthâtha . . 512
Ruined Temple at Rŭkhleh 515
Assyrian Eagle at Rŭkhleh 516
Medallion Head at Rŭkhleh 517
Plan of Ruins on the Summit of Hermon 521
The Lîtâny below the Natural Bridge . 533
The Lîtâny below the Khŭtweh . . . 536
Protestant Church at el Khiyam . . . 538
Castle of Belfort—Kŭl'at esh Shŭkîf . 541

PAGE
Abel-beth-maachah—Âbil el Kamh . . 545
Château Neuf—Kŭl'at Hûnîn 548
Castle of Toron—Kŭl'at Tibnîn . . . 556
Ruins of the Synagogue at Meirôn . . 576
Ruined Synagogue at Kefr Bir'im . . 580
Door-posts and Lintel of Ruined Synagogue 582
Kabr Neby Hŭzzûr, near the Ruins of Hazîreh 585
The Sheepfold—El Marâh 592
Ancient Oil-presses 597
Tomb of Hiram—Kabr Hairân . . . 601
Râs el 'Ain 604
Aqueduct at Râs el 'Ain 605
Minat Sûr—Interior Harbor 613
Ruins of the Cathedral 615
Broken Murex 620
Bridge over the Lîtâny—Jisr el Kâsimîyeh 630
Guest-chamber—El 'Allîyeh 636
Coins of Alexander and Philip . . . 639
Lid of Sarcophagus, with Phœnician Inscription 643
Minat Saida—Interior Harbor . . } 646
The Sea Castle—Kŭl'at el Bahr . . } 646
Castle of St. Louis—Kŭl'at el M'azeh . 647

INTRODUCTION.

The land where the Word-Made-Flesh dwelt amongst men must ever continue to be an important part of Revelation; and Palestine may be fairly regarded as the divinely prepared tablet whereon God's messages to men have been graven in ever-living characters. This fact invests even the geography and topography of the Holy Land with special importance. But there are other considerations which impart to it a deeper and more practical interest. From this land we have received that marvellous spiritual and figurative nomenclature of the Bible through which nearly all true religious knowledge has been communicated to men. Here it was devised and first used, and here are found its best illustrations. We learn from history that it required fifteen centuries of time, and an endless array of providential arrangements, co-operating with human and superhuman agents and agencies, to bring this medium of intercourse between God and man to the needed perfection.

Numerous and complicated as were the instrumentalities employed, and for so many generations of human history, still they may be all grouped under two fundamental expedients—

The selecting, training, and governing of a peculiar people; and, The creating and preparing an appropriate home for them.

Abraham and Canaan, the Hebrew Nation and the Land of Promise, the long ongoing and outworking of the Mosaic Economy, in conjunction with the people of God and the physical phenomena of their earthly Inheritance — by and through all these did the Spirit of Inspiration evolve and perfect man's religious language. Palestine, fashioned and furnished by the Creator's hand, was the arena, and the Hebrew people and the surrounding nations were the actors brought upon it, and made to perform their parts by the Divine Master. When the end and aim had been reached, the spiritual and figurative nomenclature fully developed and matured, the Gospel of Salvation was sent forth on its high mission of mercy amongst the nations of the earth.

Like other books, the Bible has had a home, a birthplace; but, beyond all other examples, this birthplace has given form and color to its language. The underlying basis of this wonderful dialect of the kingdom of heaven is found in the land itself. But as in the resurrection "that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual," so man's religious language was preceded by and grew out of the natural and the mundane. The material out of which was formed our spiritual dialect was of the earth earthy, requiring to be transformed and transfigured ere it could become a fit medium for things heavenly.

To study to the best advantage the transfiguration of that language, we must resort to Palestine, where it was first learned and spoken. That land, we repeat, has had an all-pervading influence upon the costume and character of the Bible. Without the former, the latter, as we now have it, could not have been produced. To ascertain this fact, and to notice by what process of analogy and of contrast the physical and the mundane came to signify and illustrate things spiritual and heavenly, may well occupy much of our attention during this pilgrimage through the Holy Land.

Let us, therefore, deal reverently with it, walk softly over those acres once trodden by patriarchs, prophets, and poets, and even by the sacred feet of the Son of God himself. Let us put off the soiled sandal of worldliness and sin as we enter this consecrated domain. There is design in this peculiar grouping of mountains and plains, hills and valleys, lakes and rivers, the desert and the sea, all in intimate association with the marvellous and miraculous incidents and phenomena recorded in the Bible.[1]

The Land and the Book constitute the all-perfect text of the Word of God, and can be best studied together. To read the one by the light of the other has been the privilege of the author for more than forty years, and the governing purpose in publishing is to furnish additional facilities for this delightful study to those who have not been thus exceptionally favored.

The sites and scenes described in the work were visited many times during the author's long residence in the country; and the results, so far as they bear on Biblical illustration, appear in the current narrative. The conversations are held by the way-side, on horseback, in the open country, or in the tent, and the reader is at liberty to regard himself as the author's travelling companion, in full sympathy with the purpose and aim of this pilgrimage through the Holy Land.

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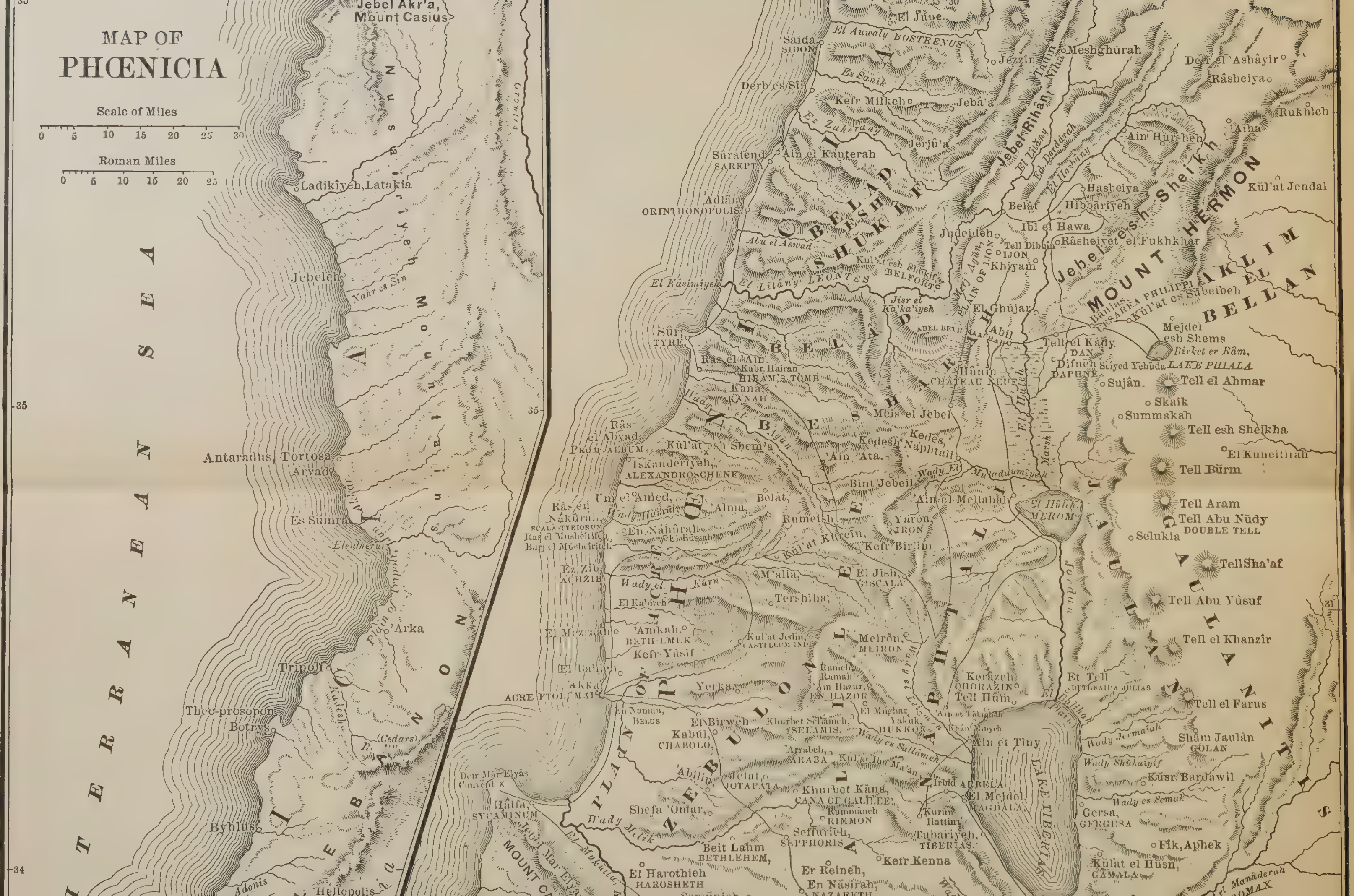
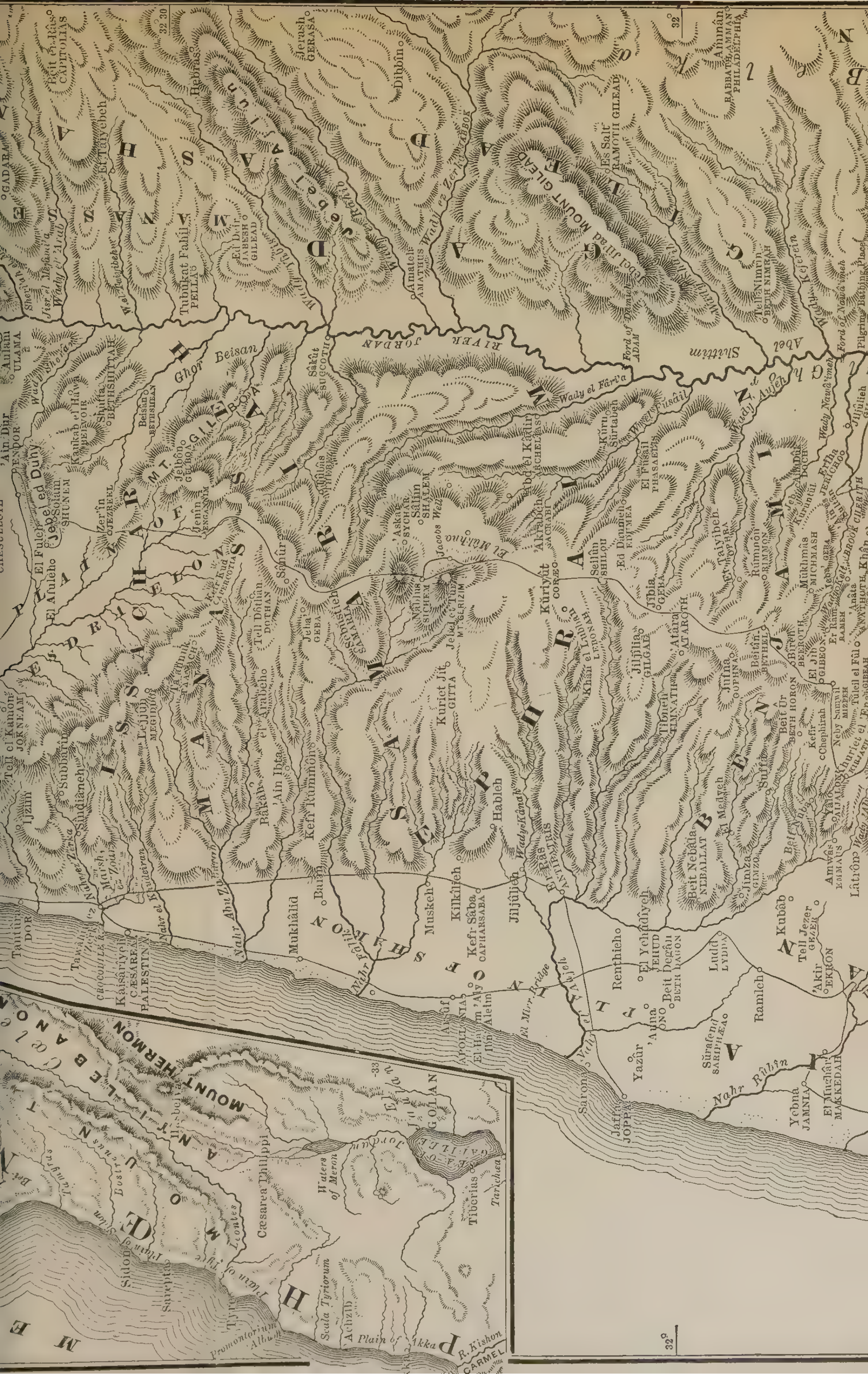
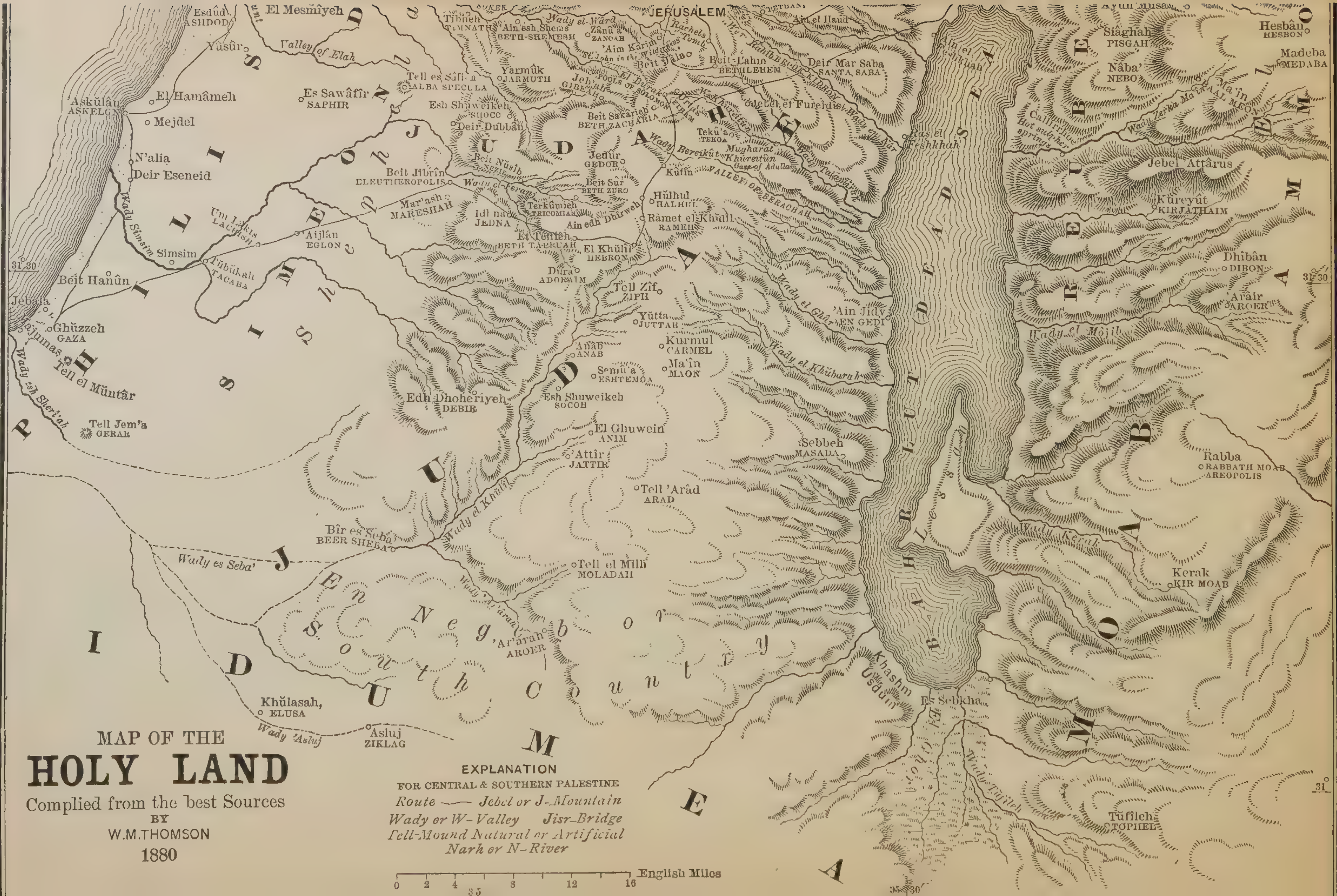
[1] See pages 289 and 290.


MAP OF PHŒNICIA


PLAIN OF ESDRAELON
MT. GILBOA
MOUNT GILEAD
Jebel Jil'ad
RIVER JORDAN
Ghor Beisan
Wady el Fâr'a
Wady ez Zerka JABBOK
Wady Kânah
Wady Aujeh
Nahr Rûbîn
Nahr el Aujeh
Nahr Abu Zabûra
Nahr el Falik
PLAIN OF SHARON
ISSACHAR
MANASSEH
EPHRAIM
BENJAMIN
GAD
Jerash GERASA
Dibbîn
Beit er Râs CAPITOLIAS
El Taiyibeh
Hebras
Tubukat Fahil PELLA
Ed Deir JABESH GILEAD
Amateh AMATHUS
Es Salt RAMOTH GILEAD
'Ammân RABBATH AMMAN PHILADELPHIA
Tell Nimrîn BETH NIMRAH
Ford of Dâmieh ADAM
Shittim
Abel
Ford of Nawâ'imeh
Pilgrims Bathing Place
Beisân BETHSHEAN
Kaukab el Hawa BELVOIR
Shutta BETHSHITTAH
'Ain Dûr ENDOR
Jebel ed Duhy
Solam SHUNEM
Zer'in JEZREEL
Jelbôn
Jenin ENGANNIM
El Fuleh
El Afuleh
Sâkût SUCCOTH
Tûbâs THEBEZ
'Askar SYCHAR
Sâlim SHALEM
Jacob's Well
Nâblus SICHEM
Jebel et Tûr MT. GERIZIM
Sebustieh SAMARIA
Jeba GEBA
Tell Dôthân DOTHAN
Kefr Kud CAPERCOTIA
Ta'annuk TAANACH
Lejjûn MEGIDDO
Tell el Kaimôn JOKNEAM
Subbarîn
Ijzim
Tantura DOR
Kaisarîyeh CÆSAREA PALESTINA
Crocodile R.
Mukhâlid
Kefr Rummôn
'Ain Ibta
Bâkâh
Kuriet Jit GITTA
Hableh
Kilkîlieh
Kefr Sâba CAPHARSABA
Muskeh
Jiljûlieh
Ras el 'Ain ANTIPATRIS
Arsûf APOLLONIA
Kûriyût CORÆA
'Akrabeh ACRABI
Kh. Fusail PHASAELIS
Seilûn SHILOH
Khân el Lubbân LEBONAH
Jiljilia GILGAL
Tibneh TIMNATH
'Atara ATAROTH
Jifna GOPHNA
Beitîn BETHEL
El Taiyibeh OPHRA
Rummon RIMMON
Mukhmâs MICHMASH
Jeba GEBA
Er Râm RAMAH
El Jîb GIBEON
Beit Ûr BETH HORON
Beit Nebâla NEBALLAT
Jimzu GIMZO
El Medyeh
'Amwâs EMMAUS
Lâtrûn
Yâlo AIJALON
Neby Samwîl MIZPEH
Kuriet el 'Enab KIRJATH JEARIM
'Anata ANATHOTH
Eriha JERICHO
Brook Cherith
Kurûntul
'Ain Duk DOCH
Lydd LYDDA
Ramleh
El Yehudîyeh JEHUD
Beit Dejan BETH DAGON
Kefr 'Ana ONO
Yâzûr
Sarona
Jâffa JOPPA
Yebna JAMNIA
El Mughâr MAKKEDAH
'Akir EKRON
Tell Jezer GEZER
Kubâb
Sarafend SARIPHÆA
Renthieh
PHILISTIA
32°
32 30
MOUNT HERMON
ANTI-LEBANON
LEBANON
GOLAN
Jordan
Waters of Meron
SEA OF GALILEE
Tiberias
Tarichea
Cæsarea Philippi
Sidon
Sarepta
Tyre
Plain of Tyre
Promontorium Album
Scala Tyriorum
Achzib
Plain of Akka
R. Kishon
CARMEL
Leontes
Bostrenus
PHOENICIA



MAP OF THE

HOLY LAND

Compiled from the best Sources

BY

W.M.THOMSON

1880

EXPLANATION

FOR CENTRAL & SOUTHERN PALESTINE

Route —— *Jebel or J-Mountain*

Wady or W-Valley *Jisr-Bridge*

Tell-Mound Natural or Artificial

Narh or N-River

THE LAND AND THE BOOK.

I.

JERUSALEM TO BETHLEHEM.

Site of the Ascension.—Buildings erected by Princesse Latour d'Auvergne.—Tombs of the Prophets.—Mount of Offence.—Bethphage.—Kefr Silwân, Village of Siloam.—Jerusalem the City of Solomon.—Proverbs of Solomon.—Oriental Proverbs, Ancient and Modern.—Contrast and Resemblance between Hebrew and Arabic Proverbs.—Moral Condition of Jerusalem indicated by the Proverbs of Solomon.—Departure from Jerusalem.—Butm, Terebinth.—Lifta, Nephtoah.—Chasm in the Rock explored by Captain Warren.—Deir el Musŭllabeh, Convent of the Cross.—Maundrell.—Valley of the Giants, Plain of Rephaim.—Battle-field between David and the Philistines.—"The Mulberry-trees."—Deir Mâr Eliâs.—Kubbet Râhîl, Rachel's Sepulchre.—Rachel not buried in Machpelah.—Anointing of Saul by Samuel.—"Rachel weeping for her Children in Ramah."—Ramah in the Coasts of Bethlehem.—Ephrath, Bethlehem.—David's Well.—Journey of the Holy Family to Bethlehem.—"Decree from Cæsar Augustus that all the World should be Taxed."—Church of St. Mary, and the Convents connected with it.—Grotto of the Nativity, and the Sacred Sites within it.—Tombs of Eusebius and Jerome.—The Inn and the Manger.—The Khân and the Manzûl.—Pilgrimages to Sacred Sites Modern, not Biblical.—The Wise Men from the East.—The Levite of Bethlehem, and Micah's House of Gods.—Laish, Dan.—Apostasy of the Danites.—Destruction of the Tribe of Benjamin.—Ruth the Moabitess.—Josephus, and the History of Ruth.—Naomi and Ruth.—Gleaners at Bethlehem.—Boaz and Ruth.—Salutations, Ancient and Modern.—Parched Corn.—Plucking Ears of Wheat by the Way-side.—Sleeping at the Threshing-floor.—The Veil.—Plucking off the Shoe.—Facility of Oriental Divorce.—Spitting upon a Person or Thing.

Mount of Olives, Sunday, May 4th.

I HAVE spent the last two days rambling through and around the Holy City, and revisiting the sites and scenes of greatest interest. Yesterday I extended my walk down the eastern slope of Olivet until I came over against Bethany. My object was to examine the ridge north of that village, which has been selected by some as the place from whence the blessed Saviour ascended to heaven. Various sites along that ridge are well adapted for the scene of that glorious event; and I was more than satisfied to find that no precise spot had been fixed upon for it by either monkish tradition or modern research.

The only guide as to the place is given in Luke, and from the record it is plain that the ascension did not occur at or near the church at Kefr et Tûr on the top of Olivet, and in full view of Jerusalem.[1] It must have taken place somewhere down the east side of the mount "as far as to Bethany;" I do not suppose, however, that the triumphant close of our Lord's mission on earth occurred in, or even very near to that village. There is no intimation that any but the apostles witnessed the ascension, and hence I think that a retired place was chosen somewhere along the ridge you have just visited. It is highly probable that the apostolic company, led by the risen Redeemer, came up the direct road from the city to Bethany, past the hamlet of Et Tûr. East of it they probably turned aside from the path that leads down to Bethany, keeping to the left until they came over against the village. There they paused in some secluded spot, to receive the parting admonitions and the benediction of their glorified Lord.

It appears from Acts i. 6–11, that there occurred a deeply interesting conversation between Jesus and the apostles on that occasion. "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." That is all we shall know about this stupendous event until "He shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe."[1]

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[1] Luke xxiv. 50–52.

Coming back to Kefr et Tûr, I went to examine a group of new buildings south-west of that village, erected, as I was informed, by a French lady. There is a church and dwelling-house, and a large open court or yard, around which runs a covered arcade, and in the walls are inserted about thirty marble slabs, having the Lord's Prayer engraved upon them in as many different languages.

I visited that establishment in 1865, before it was entirely finished. The lady who built it was Princesse Latour d'Auvergne, a relative of the Emperor Louis Napoleon. The place was chosen because it contains the cave in which, according to tradition, Jesus taught the Lord's Prayer to his apostles. Hence that lady caused the Prayer to be engraved upon the slabs which you saw, thus giving visible and beautiful testimony to the essential unity of Christian faith and worship in all lands. Beneath the west end of this unique court is a subterranean chapel, and a number of ancient sepulchres, which have been cleaned out and neatly plastered. These constitute the local basis for the tradition, which appears to be as old as the fourth century. The place is well worth visiting.

Leaving that curious locality, I came, after a considerable descent along the face of Olivet towards the south-west, to the entrance into the so-called Tombs of the Prophets. They appear to be quite extensive, consisting of winding or semi-circular galleries, passing under the mountain more than a hundred feet from east to west, and terminating in a rotunda about eighty feet from the entrance. I did not count the niches for the bodies, but there may be thirty visible, and there are side loculi filled with rubbish.

There is no authority for the name which these sepulchres commonly bear, nor for that of the apostles, sometimes applied to them. The apostles were certainly not buried there; and no one even pretends to know for which of the prophets, if for any, they were prepared. Speculation is, therefore, useless in reference to them, as it is, singularly enough, in regard to every one of the ancient tombs in and around Jerusalem.

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[1] 2 Thess. i. 10.

Continuing my walk southwards, and crossing the lower road to Bethany, I wandered for some time over the rocky ridge immediately above and east of the village of Kefr Silwân.

It is the Mount of Offence,

> That opprobrious hill
> Right against the Temple of God,

which tradition has selected for the seat of those "high places" built by Solomon, to gratify the many "strange women" who "turned away his heart after other gods," when he was old.[1]

My object was to find the site of Bethphage, located by some topographers upon the Mount of Offence. The position may possibly accord with the statements made by the sacred writers, and there are distinct traces of ancient quarries here and there; but I left the hill without reaching any conclusion in regard to the site of the long-lost Bethphage.

My impression is that this location is in the wrong direction from Bethany, and too far west to correspond to the tenor of the Gospel narratives, which seem to imply that Jesus, in journeying from Jericho towards Jerusalem, came to Bethphage before arriving at Bethany.[2] Mark and Luke both mention Bethphage before Bethany. Some have located it at Abu Dîs, but that village is too far south of the road from Jericho. I therefore think that the site of Bethphage has yet to be identified.

From the bare Mount of Offence I descended to the valley of the Kidron, through the dilapidated village of Siloam, or Kefr Silwân, as it is called, an irregular line of wretched hovels, extending half a mile along the base of the mount.

It has no special Biblical interest, but some of the houses are connected with rock chambers which were once sepulchres, and the hill-side has been cut away in many places by ancient quarries.

Leaving that squalid abode of rude Moslems, I passed up the valley by Absalom's tomb to the Church of the Virgin, and so returned to our tents. This is our last evening upon the Mount of

[1] 1 Kings xi. 1–7.

[2] Matt. xxi. 1; Mark xi. 1; Luke xix. 29.

Olives, and I shall leave it with regret, for my interest in these sacred scenes has deepened every day, and I believe would continue to increase, should we prolong our sojourn here for months. This visit has been the realization of a life-long aspiration, nor have I been disappointed with the Holy City. In my boyhood's dreams, and always when at a distance, Jerusalem has been pre-eminently the City of Solomon; and even now, when walking through her streets, my imagination is pervaded with his august presence.

And naturally so, for that was the era of Jerusalem's greatest national glory, architectural splendor, and literary celebrity. David, it is true, conquered it from the Jebusites, and made it the capital of the kingdom; but he spent the greater part of his life elsewhere. Solomon was born here, and passed his entire life in Jerusalem. He it was who erected that magnificent Temple, and gathered thither the wealth and the luxury of the world, with, alas! their ever attendant moral corruption. That, too, was the classic age of Hebrew literature. Solomon was not only celebrated for wisdom, but he was also a great philosopher and writer, and three of his productions are preserved to us in the canon of sacred Scripture. "And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes."[1] Most of these works have perished, but we have many of his wise sayings in the Book of Proverbs.

The inquiry has frequently arisen in my mind, whether the proverbs of Solomon might not be happily illustrated by those in current use amongst these Oriental people. Do not many of them resemble those of Solomon?

A large number are identical with those in the Bible. But this opens a wide field for discussion.

Not too wide, I hope, for our present leisure, and the topic promises to be both entertaining and profitable. Time and place also render it peculiarly appropriate. Let us, therefore, enter upon it at once. Solomon, you say, spake three thousand proverbs.

The Bible says it; but if he did, he never wrote them; or, if written, they were not "copied out" either by "the men of Hezekiah" or by any one else, so far as we know.[1] Were every verse in the canonical Book a distinct proverb, together they would not amount to a thousand; and many of them are parables more or less expanded, even taking the form, sometimes, of short allegories. Still, we need not be surprised at the number three thousand. The Arabs far exceed that. I have myself seen and read many more than three thousand, and have heard others current amongst the people which I have not met with in any written collection. Neither need we be amazed at the wide range of Solomon's studies. Here, too, the Arabs far surpass him. They have gathered the material for their proverbs from all nature, have composed them out of every conceivable thing, visible and invisible—God and man, angels and devils, heaven and earth, sun, moon, and stars; beasts, birds, and insects, and creeping things; trees, plants, and flowers; thunder and lightning, rain, hail, snow, and stormy winds; fountains, rivers, lakes, and seas; night and day; sickness and health; life and death; time and eternity; and so on *ad infinitum*, through the whole world of objects, real and imaginary.

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[1] I Kings iv. 32, 33.

Still farther to widen the range of their proverbial expressions, they appropriate every attribute, quality, habit, custom, costume, and incidental circumstance connected with, or supposed to belong to, each and every group of individuals or things, in the vast universe of existences. Take the camel as an illustration. There is scarcely any limit to the proverbs which have been derived from this patient slave, and inseparable companion of the Arabs. Its size and sex, age, color, habits, diseases, accidents; its manifold uses; its milk and flesh, hair and hide; its huge hump; crooked, clumsy legs, spongy feet, short tail, small ears; large, soft, gazelle eyes, slit nose, sullen lip, prodigious mouth; its affection for its young, and for its master; its patience, docility, and mighty strength; its jealousy, stupidity, ferocity; its manner of eating and drinking; its ability to endure thirst, to make long and swift journeys; its growling, biting, fighting, and other things camelish without limit—all are availed of for proverbial purposes. In a single collection which I had the curiosity to analyze, the camel is mentioned two hundred and twenty-two

z Camel

---

[1] Prov. xxv. 1.

times, the horse thirty-three, the donkey seventeen, the dog twenty-three, sheep twelve, goats ten, the wolf sixteen, the hyena twelve, the ostrich ten, lizards seventeen, locusts eight, lion eight, cow five, and the serpent eight times. The camel, therefore, is spoken of oftener than all the other animals together. This is natural, but it marks a surprising difference between the Arabic and the Hebrew proverbs. Camels are not once named by Solomon, an omission very remarkable, since they formed an important item in the wealth of the Hebrews in all ages.

The greatest number of Arab proverbs, however, like those of Solomon, are derived from the physical, mental, and moral phenomena of human life, character, and history, and have reference to man himself. The qualities and virtues most highly commended are patience, prudence, courage, fortitude, fidelity, hospitality, the government of the tongue, justice, generosity, forgiveness, truthfulness, perseverance, secrecy, and such like. Of follies and vices, none are more odious, according to their proverbial code of morals, than cowardice, treachery, envy, avarice, parsimony, ingratitude, idleness, laziness, gluttony, garrulity, boasting, injustice, oppression, and other kindred traits. These constitute the staple of an immense number of proverbial formulas and maxims.

In regard to the subject-matter of the two sets of proverbs—Hebrew and Arabic—there are both striking resemblances and surprising contrasts. For example, the really ancient proverbs of the tent-dwelling Arabs indicate an almost total absence of religion, and of religious institutions and ideas. Neither temple, altar, priest, nor sacrifice, nor any kind of formal worship, is mentioned. The name Allah, God, it is true, occurs often enough, but the reverent worship of God is rarely even alluded to. Among the Hebrews, on the contrary, a large proportion of their proverbial maxims is based upon their Holy Law, its precepts and institutions. Whether the comparison be limited to the books of Solomon in our Bible, or includes also the later writings, called the Apocrypha, we find the Hebrew mind imbued with a solemn sense of religious obligation. To love, serve, and worship Jehovah, and obey his commandments, is with them man's highest end and aim. Such is not the case with the ancient Arabs. They were essentially a non-spiritual people, and their proverbs take an altogether lower and mundane range. Things and thoughts, ways and works, are good, bad, or indifferent, as they were supposed to affect happily or otherwise man's condition in this world. Their wisdom was of the earth, earthy.

Another radical contrast between the two sets of proverbs appears in the fundamental matter of education. The ancient Arabs knew nothing of books, schools, or teachers, and had not current amongst them a single proverb, to my knowledge, that was suggested by, or had reference to, this most important subject. If we turn from this barren wilderness to the proverbs in the Bible, the contrast is most gratifying and suggestive. In very many of Solomon's wise sayings, the careful training of children is urged upon parents as a paramount duty, and one to the right discharge of which are added the most encouraging promises and the richest blessings. Such maxims would appear singularly out of place in any collection of truly ancient Arabic proverbs. They could neither have invented, understood, nor used them.

This is, indeed, a most important difference, and one greatly to the disadvantage of the Arabs. What do you infer from their proverbs in regard to the character of the two people?

If you refer to what is technically called morals, the comparison leads to a conclusion anything but flattering to the Hebrews. The writings of Solomon and of the prophets reveal a condition of society in this respect which apparently had no parallel amongst the Bedawîn tribes. There can be no mistake about this, for the Biblical statements are minute, specific, and appalling. A little reflection, however, will modify our surprise. Solomon drew his pictures from crowded city life, where monarchical institutions, wealth, luxury, and idleness had thoroughly corrupted primitive simplicity and purity. These things never invaded the tent-dwelling Arabs of the Desert, and hence the absence amongst them of those revolting exhibitions of vice necessarily implied in many of Solomon's proverbs.

This result is so painful and surprising that I feel reluctant to accept it.

Naturally enough; and if we drop the subject at this point, the comparison would be very defective and unfair to the Hebrews. For example, the position of women amongst them was far higher than with the Arabs, and the character of Hebrew women must have been, on the whole, such as to command and sustain this higher position. The Arabs can show no list of pious and illustrious ladies like those who adorn the history of the Hebrews. No Bedawîn mother ever taught, or could teach, such a "prophecy" as King Lemuel learned from his; nor could the picture of "a virtuous woman," given in the last chapter of Proverbs, have been copied by an Arab. The conception by him of such a character was a moral impossibility. There are, in fact, but very few Arabic proverbs about women, and this is in perfect accord with their ideas and feelings in regard to them. The men dislike to mention the females of their households, and it is an affront for an ordinary acquaintance even to allude to them. Listen to some of their current maxims: "Everything is easy but women, and the mention of them." Another advises paterfamilias not to allow his womenkind to live in the upper story, nor to learn to write—treat them roughly, and accustom them to hear "no," for "yes" will make them insolent. "The only religion for a woman is to stay at home." "He who divulges a secret to a woman is a fool." These are some of the mildest and least offensive on this subject; others are far less flattering to the sex.

I have no desire to hear more, but prefer to devote the time to those that throw light upon Biblical proverbs. I suppose there must be many such.

As to verbal costume, and the artificial form in which they are cast, there is often a striking resemblance between Arabic and Hebrew proverbs. In those of Solomon we often find different things, grouped together apparently with reference to some element common to them all. Thus he says: "There are three things that are never satisfied, yea, four things say not, It is enough;" and again, "There be three things which are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not." The things thus associated are not always very remarkable, as in the following group: "There be three things which go well, yea, four are comely in going: a lion, which is strongest among beasts, and turneth not away for any; a greyhound; an he goat also; and a king, against whom there is no rising up."[1]

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[1] Prov. xxx. 15, 18, 29–31.

Now, the Arabs are extravagantly fond of such grouping, and often carry it to an absurd exaggeration, linking together eight, ten, and occasionally more than twenty different objects. Some of their groups are pretty and suggestive. Thus: "The affairs of a king are not perfected except by four things—counsel, money, auxiliaries, and secrecy;" just as husbandry requires four things—soil, seed, water, and sun. So also the following triplet: "To confer favors happily, three things are necessary—promptness, diminution, and secrecy." If prompt, you confer immediate relief; treated as a light matter, the value is magnified; if done privately, the recipient will delight to publish it. Another proverb says, "Three things give one a fever—a loitering messenger, a lamp that will not give light, and waiting dinner for a guest who does not come." All may profitably remember the following: "For four things there is no recall—the spoken word, the arrow sped from the bow, the march of fate, and the time that is past."

Remembering that Solomon was a king, we will not be surprised to find some of his wise maxims derived from or intended to magnify his royal dignity. "The king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion; but his favor is as dew upon the grass;" and again, "A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes."[1]

King James is said to have derived his boasted kingcraft from Solomon; but as the Arabs had no king, very few of their proverbs, I suppose, have any reference to that "craft."

They generally contrived to blend somewhat of the ludicrous or the whimsical with the idea of royal terror, as in the following: "A Wazîr, who rules over the Sultân, is like a man riding on a lion; the people fear *him*, and he is afraid of what he rides on." Again, "He who holds the Sultân's secret should immediately emigrate." "If called to enter the Sultân's palace, go in blind, and come out dumb," that is, see nothing; or, if you see, say nothing, for another proverb warns the thoughtless that "a blabbing tongue cuts off the head of its owner."

These have all a decided resemblance to some of Solomon's maxims, and the following still more so. "The wounds of the sword can be cured; but those of the tongue cannot be endured." "A fool hastens in his talk, but the wise man delays and is reserved." "A soft answer subdues anger." "A continual dropping wears away the solid rock." "Open rebuke is better than concealed hatred." "His business is soon despatched who sends a present before him." "Surety is repentance." "In the time of trouble you will discover who is your brother." "He wanders who takes the blind for guide." "Worse than death is that on account of which death is desired."

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[1] Prov. xix. 12; xx. 8.

As the most ancient Arabic proverbs indicate an acquaintance with the Old Testament, so many of the more recent show an intimate knowledge of the New. Thus: "You cannot gather grapes from a thorn bush." "As you judge others, others will judge you." "The physician heals others, and is himself sick." "I will not do such a thing until a camel goes through the eye of a needle." These, and hundreds like them, need no comment. They differ from similar maxims in the New Testament merely in unimportant verbal changes, which are not often improvements. The Arabs are clumsy imitators, and generally mar everything foreign which they attempt to reproduce. To judge fairly of their wit and wisdom, we should select proverbs that are indigenous and original, with the breath of the Desert and the smell of the camel about them.

Very many Arabic proverbs are cast in a poetic mould, which makes them not only more agreeable to the ear, but greatly aids the memory. The Arabs are extremely partial to a kind of rhythm, and even in prose string together words and short sentences which terminate in similar sounds. The Korân itself abounds in the rhythmical. Proverbs thus composed are generally very brief and elliptical, and in translation lose much of their beauty. Thus: El harakat, barakat—Mere motion is a blessing—a truth which all healthy children at play confirm. Măn jedd, wâjed—He who strives earnestly will obtain; Er răfeek, kŭbl et tăreck—Inquire about your fellow-traveller before you ask about the road; Zôujun min 'ood, kheîrun min el kăoud—Marriage with a post is better than to sit solitary—a matrimonial maxim eminently Oriental; as is also the following: Marriage is of three kinds, Zôuj bâhrin, zôuj dâhrin, zôuj mâhrin—Marriage for beauty, implying love; marriage for convenience, and marriage for money—not confined certainly to the denizens of the Desert. I will not weary you any longer with such hard Arabic words, but merely add that many proverbs, in common use amongst all nations, are clothed in poetic dress, and there is something akin to this style in those of the Bible. To appreciate such examples, however, one needs to be familiar with the original languages.

The difficulty of translating foreign, compact maxims may, perhaps, account for the obscurity of the meaning of some of Solomon's proverbs. They probably had a pith and pertinence to the dwellers in Jerusalem which we cannot discover.

This is still more applicable to the proverbs of the Arabs than to those of Solomon. There are hundreds now found in Arabic collections which convey to us no idea whatever. But with these large deductions, the list is long and rich, and many will survive even an imperfect translation.

I have somewhere met with the observation that proverbs contain the essence of a people's knowledge and experience, and are the infallible indication of their civilization and character. If this was true of the inhabitants of Jerusalem in the time of Solomon, they must have been sadly perverse and corrupt.

I have no doubt of it, and from a careful study of his proverbs it is possible to gain a truthful, though not an agreeable, acquaintance with the people of that city as Solomon knew them. A professor of comparative anatomy can reconstruct the skeleton of an extinct animal from a single bone, and the antiquarian will deduce from a chip of flint a stone hatchet, or a bit of pottery the degree of civilization reached by tribes which have long since ceased to exist; and it certainly requires less study and research to learn from a nation's proverbs the social and moral condition of its people. By their aid we can carry ourselves back to the age, however remote, in which those proverbs were in common use, can associate with the people in their daily life, listen to their conversation, laugh at their wit, and mourn over their follies. By the aid of Solomon's proverbs we can transfer ourselves to ancient Jerusalem, and discover what must have been the character of her people nearly three thousand years ago.

Solomon lived, reigned, and wrote in this city, and no doubt drew his pictures of society from what he saw and heard. Jerusalem had become a moral microcosm—a living epitome of the human race, gathered here by the Providence of God for the study of the wisest of men. The results of his observations, cast in proverbial mould, have been handed down the ages for the instruction and admonition of all generations. In this field of knowledge there can be nothing new under the sun for any who come after the king to discover and describe.

What, then, was the condition of society in the Holy City at that time?

The answer to this question will comprehend every phase of moral character and every condition of human life from the king on the throne to the beggar on the dung-hill. There were good and wise parents in the Holy City, and well-trained children who kept their father's commandment, and did not forsake the law of their mother; and there were foolish children, the shame of their father and the heaviness of their mother. Faithful husbands were here, and the virtuous wife whose price was above rubies; and she, too, was here, whose house was the way to hell, leading down to the pit. The diligent who grew rich were in the places of business; and also the sluggard folding his hands to sleep, upon whom poverty came as one that travelleth, and want as an armed man. The destitute were in her streets pleading for charity, and benevolent men opened the hand of liberality, and dealt out bread to the hungry; and here were those whom the people cursed, because they withheld corn in the time of famine. Honest merchants were in her markets, and so there were sharpers who dealt with divers weights, divers measures, and the balances of deceit, making the ephah small, and the shekel great. Men of peace were in Jerusalem, and others who sowed discord and plotted mischief. False witnesses were in her courts, and corrupt judges took bribes, and sold justice for money in her gates. Tale-bearers and slanderers scattered arrows, firebrands, and death, saying it was only in sport; and men of blood joined hand to hand to rob and murder. Hypocrites were here, and the flatterer whose words were smoother than butter, but more deadly than drawn swords. Sellers adulterated their wares, and buyers drove hard bargains, crying, It is naught, it is naught, and went away to boast of their cunning. Not a few came to want by imprudently striking hands and becoming surety; and the iron-hearted usurer crept about in the dark, hated and cursed by all men, yet fattening the while upon the follies, the vices, or the misfortunes of his victims. Many were frugal and temperate, we hope; others, we know, were mighty to mingle strong drink, and tarried long at the wine, until it bit as a serpent, and stung like an adder.

O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! much that was good, and noble, and godly was within thy gates, no doubt, but alas! there was also everything vile and horrible. Traitors, parricides, and patricides, who sought to climb to the throne over the dead bodies of nearest relatives; the oppressor grinding the face of the poor; captives in chains, and slaves sinking under cruel burdens; prisoners rotting in loathsome dungeons; and beneath, and above, and in the midst of all, raged the foul plague of lewd debauchery.

Surely, your indictment against the Holy City is too comprehensive to be literally true.

We cannot be essentially mistaken, for these things not only existed in Jerusalem, but they, and others still more odious, had become so notorious by long and shameless practice as to form the basis of those pungent proverbs. Solomon could not have originated such things. He saw them, heard them, and came in constant contact with them. Things rare and foreign do not furnish the staple of a nation's proverbs. They are of home growth, and spring up naturally from the daily life of the people. We may, therefore, be quite sure that Solomon did not draw his facts from his imagination, nor resort to distant lands to gather materials for his wise sayings. He found them within the walls of his capital; not a few of them within the precincts of his own vast and miscellaneous household. The nation was rapidly ripening for destruction, even under the golden sceptre of Solomon. No wonder that his setting sun went down behind a dark cloud, and that his feeble and foolish successor brought the kingdom to the very verge of ruin, and made it easy for Shishak, King of Egypt, to capture and plunder Jerusalem itself.

Well, I shall dismiss from memory this sad picture of Old Jerusalem, and direct my thoughts to that New Jerusalem which John "saw coming down from God out of heaven." "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."[1]

Zion, thrice happy place,
Adorned with wondrous grace,
And walls of strength embrace thee round;
In thee our tribes appear,
To pray and praise and hear
The sacred Gospel's joyful sound.

May peace attend thy gate,
And joy within thee wait,
To bless the soul of every guest;
The man that seeks thy peace,
And wishes thine increase,
A thousand blessings on him rest!

May 5th.

Our line of travel thus far has made us familiar with Southern Palestine and the region east of Jerusalem; but there are many Biblical sites of great interest south, west, and north of the city, which I am anxious to see.

Certainly they must be visited, and for that purpose our first station will be Bethlehem; but, instead of taking the direct road, it will be more profitable to make a detour by Lifta and Deir el Musŭllabeh. We shall pass along the north wall of Jerusalem, and into the regular road to Jaffa below the Russian buildings, and half an hour's ride will bring us to Lifta.

Let us wait under this large butm-tree, at the north-west corner of the city wall, until our muleteers overtake us. They go straight on to Bethlehem, and I want to give directions where to pitch the tents.

You say this tree is a terebinth; and as it is the first of the kind I have seen, I look upon it with peculiar interest.

It is the Pistacia terebinthus of botanists, the Hebrew elah, that gave name, as you remember, to the valley where David encountered and slew Goliath, as described in the seventeenth chapter of 1 Samuel. The word elah is variously translated in the Old Testament, and in the Apocrypha we read, "As the turpentine tree, I stretch out my branches, and my branches are as the branches of honour and grace." Josephus speaks of a turpentine-tree near Hebron, and the butm, as this tree is called by the Arabs, is well known to the inhabitants of the Grecian islands; but the resinous substance is not extracted from its branches by the natives of this country, who are unacquainted with its commercial value. Terebinths are not common in this region, but in some parts of Gilead they are the prevailing forest trees; and the ruins of a place called Yajûs are overshadowed by terebinths of great size.

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[1] Rev. xxi. 2, 27.

EL BUTM—TEREBINTH.

The mules having passed, and instructions given, we may now prosecute our ride to Lifta.

I see that Lifta is identified with Nephtoah, one of the cities on the border of Judah, west of Jerusalem.

And correctly, I suppose; for, according to Joshua xv. 8, 9, the boundary was drawn from the valley of Hinnom westward to the top of the hill, and thence "unto the fountain of the water of Nephtoah." Lifta is in the right direction, and it is abundantly supplied with good water, a blessing possessed by no other place along this line. The village is some distance to the right of our road, and clings to the cliffs that overhang the deep wady Beit Hanîna, which passes south-west between it and Kŭlônieh. We need not descend the rugged pathway to the village, as there is nothing ancient about it except the cliffs from which flow out Nephtoah's fountains of water. On my first visit I sought refuge from the burning sun under the shadow of a great rock, having for "companions" flocks of sheep and goats with their shepherds taking their noontide rest there, and it is to this custom, I suppose, that the royal poet alludes in his Song of Songs.[1] The inhabitants of Lifta are industrious, and many of them are muleteers, who furnish mules and horses for travellers, and accompany them on their tours through the country.

Captain Warren got many of his excavators from this village, and here occurred one of his most perilous adventures, which he thus describes: "About a mile south of the village of Lifta, on the crest of a hill, is a chasm in the rocks, about which there are many traditions, and which we failed to explore in the spring. We went there last Monday, provided with three ladders, reaching together one hundred and twenty feet, and a dock-yard rope one hundred and sixty-five feet long. We had three men to assist in lowering us on the rope. The entrance from the top just allows of a man squeezing through; but, as you descend, the chasm opens out until, at one hundred and twenty-five feet, it is about fifteen feet by thirty inches. At this point is a ledge, and we rested there while we lowered the ladders another thirty feet, to enable us to descend to the bottom, which is at the great depth of one hundred and fifty-five feet from the surface. The chasm is exactly perpendicular, and the bottom is horizontal. Water was dripping quickly from the rocks, but ran out of sight at once. On the floor was a rough stone pillar, and near it the skeleton of an infant; close to the pillar is a cleft in the rock, very narrow, into which the water was running. I got down into this, but it is a crevice which gets narrower and narrower, and there being no hold, I slipped down until my head was about four feet below the surface. Here I stuck, every movement jamming me tighter down the cleft. Ten minutes of desperate struggling, and the help of a friendly grip, brought me to the surface again, minus a considerable portion of my skin and clothing. On ascending, we had some little excitement: at one time the grass rope-ladder caught fire; at another, the men suddenly let me down nearly three feet, the jerk nearly wrenching the rope out of their hands."

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[1] Song i. 7.

It is not easy to exaggerate the perils of such a position, nor can I conceive of antiquarian enthusiasm strong enough to induce any one to repeat the exploit. There are several other such chasms in this country, and I think they were made by earthquakes. The great earthquake that destroyed Safed in 1837 opened a chasm a short distance east of Jish, which I examined at the time, and which was subsequently filled up by the natives. We must now turn southward, and ride over the rocky hill on our left.

This rough ridge, over which our pathway lies, furnishes, I suppose, an impressive example of the process by which the surface soil has been washed away during long ages of neglect, leaving the naked rocks exposed to the burning sun.

And yet most of this region, now so bare and blasted, might be restored to comparative productiveness, and clothed with vineyards and olive-orchards, as is shown by the pretty vale below us on our right. It belongs to the Convent of the Cross, called by the natives Deir el Musŭllabeh. Both the convent and the surrounding fields and grounds have been greatly improved since my first visit on my way to 'Ain Kârim. Under the superintendence of the monks, the fields have been cleared of stones, many additional trees planted, and the entire premises, protected by substantial walls, presenting an agreeable and prosperous appearance. The convent now belongs to the Russians, and some of the new rooms are fitted up in semi-European style. It has been transformed into a theological college for the training of priests for the Orthodox Greek Church. The candidates are instructed not only in Greek and Latin, but also in modern languages.

Tradition ascribes the founding of the convent to St. Helena, and also to Tatian, King of the Georgians, in the fifth century, and the site was probably known and frequented from an early date. It was an ancient and venerated shrine when the Crusaders arrived in the country, and such it has continued to be ever since. Sir John Maundeville mentions it in his travels; and Maundrell thus speaks of its special attraction, from which, indeed, it has derived its name: "This convent is very neat in its structure, and in its situation delightful. But that which most deserves to be noted in it is the reason of its name and foundation. It is because there is the earth that nourished the root, that bore the tree, that yielded the timber, that made the cross. Under the high altar you are shown a hole in the ground where the stump of the tree stood, and it meets with not a few visitants so much more very stocks than itself, as to fall down and worship it."

The spot was reverently pointed out to me many years ago, and it is still shown to devout pilgrims. The site, and the tradition regarding it, may possibly date back to the fourth century, when the rage for such things had become general and unscrupulous. After the "invention" of the true cross by St. Helena, nothing would be more natural than the belief that the soil where the miraculous tree grew must itself have been endowed with extraordinary virtue and holiness. Having this belief to start with, it would not be difficult to find or invent the proper spot, and when thus discovered and verified, the basilica and the convent would speedily arise over it.

A sceptic might suggest that there would be some difficulty in discovering the right "hole" after the lapse of four centuries of war, revolution, and general ruin.

True; but a resort to the same means by which Bishop Macarius ascertained which of the three crosses found in the Cave of the Invention was the right one, would dispel all doubts, at least in the mind of that credulous and superstitious generation.

Spread out before us southward is the Valley of the Giants, called, in Hebrew, 'Êmek Rephaim.

It is a wide and comparatively level plain, rather than a valley.

It is both. The upper, or eastern part, is an open plain, gently declining westward, where it narrows, and ends in Wady el Werd—

the Valley of Roses. A large part of this plain is generally clothed in the spring with green wheat and barley, as it is at present—a sight rare in this part of Palestine, and therefore doubly refreshing both to the eye and the heart of the tourist. This plain is one of the noted battle-fields of the Bible, where David encountered and overthrew the Philistines, as related in 2 Samuel and 1 Chronicles: David, when "the Philistines came up yet again," was divinely directed to "fetch a compass behind them, and come upon them over against the mulberry-trees."[1]

Is there any local tradition concerning those trees, or the place where they grew?

None whatever; yet there was, doubtless, at that time, somewhere on or near this plain, a well-known grove of trees called baccaim in the Hebrew plural, but what kind of tree the baca was is quite uncertain, and it would be better to leave the word untranslated, as it is in the Arabic Bible. The name baca, both in Hebrew and Arabic, is suggestive of weeping; and as large drops issue from the branches of the mulberry-tree when cut off in the spring, it has been conjectured that the name was given to the tree from this circumstance. But this derivation is doubtful, since there are many other trees from whose branches, when cut or wounded, similar drops are seen to issue. It must remain an open question, therefore, what kind of tree the baca really was. Neither the mulberry nor its fruit are mentioned in the Bible, and this implies that the tree was not so common then in this country as it has become in modern times, owing to the cultivation of silk.

It is quite tantalizing to meet with so many uncertainties in this land of the Bible. There are doubts and conflicting theories with regard to almost every place and everything in it.

From those sources of perplexity there is no escape. For example, there are learned critics who do not accept this plain as the Valley of the Giants, and others who would even locate that valley somewhere north of Jerusalem. I think, however, that the Biblical notices connect it more or less closely with Bethlehem, and Josephus appears to imply that the Valley of Rephaim included the plain between Jerusalem and Bethlehem.[2] Most of these doubtful questions are of little importance, and we may safely leave those who delight in such problems to discuss and settle this one if they can. In the mean while, let us ride up the hill to the Convent of Deir Mâr Eliâs on our left, from where there is a wide view over the surrounding country, and Bethlehem itself shows to great advantage across the valley.

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[1] 2 Sam. v. 22–25; 1 Chron. xiv. 13–17.

[2] Ant. vii. iv. 1; vii. xii. 4.

What claim has this convent to its venerable name?

It certainly has no legitimate connection with Elijah, though tradition makes the prophet pass this way, and rest here awhile on a rock under an old olive-tree, when fleeing from Jezebel. The spot is pointed out by the road-side opposite the convent gate. The convent was probably built by a bishop called Eliâs, but at what time, and wherefore upon this particular spot, is not known. After its destruction by the Saracens, it was restored in the time of the Crusades. The site is high and healthy, and the Greek patriarch of Jerusalem has a summer retreat in this neighborhood.

Kubbet Râhîl, dome of Rachel, the native name for her sepulchre, is the next object of interest between this and Bethlehem.

Fortunately, there is no doubt in regard to the genuineness of that site, I believe.

No; the locality agrees well with the allusions to it in the thirty-fifth and forty-eighth chapters of Genesis, and elsewhere. Such a spot must ever be regarded with the respect and tender emotion which are accorded to deep sorrow. "And they journeyed," Jacob and his family, "from Beth-el; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labor. And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing (for she died), that she called his name Ben-oni: but his father called him Benjamin. And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem. And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave: that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day." This is the narrative; but it is more than mere history, for the event and the record symbolize a greater "sorrow," that took place at Ephrath nearly two thousand years after, in connection with the birth at Bethlehem of the Man of Sorrows in whom every important event in Hebrew history received its final and complete significance.[1]

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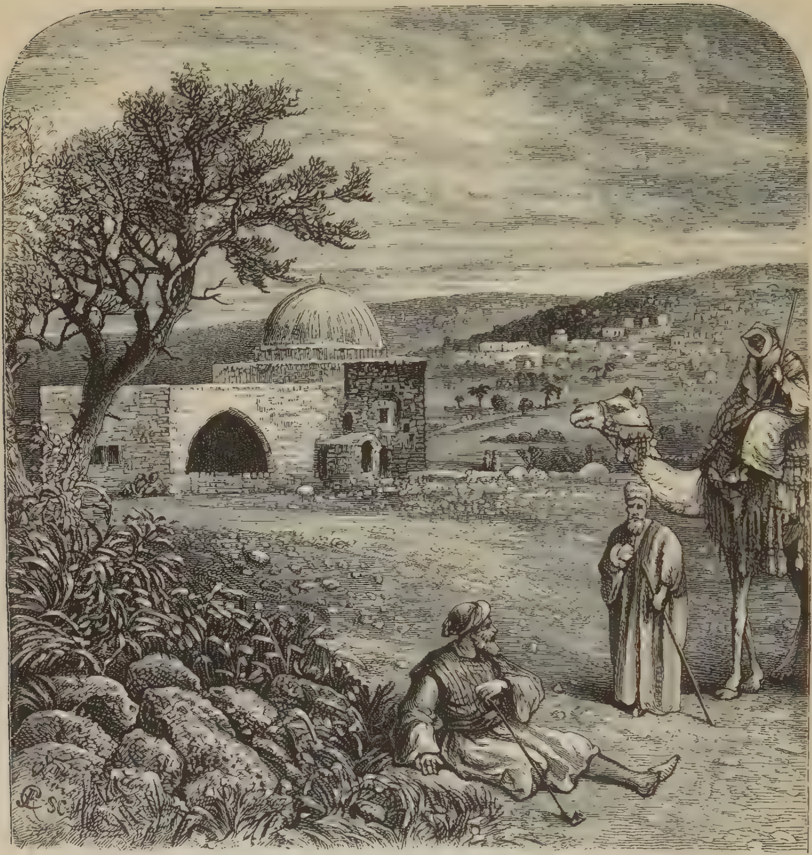
[1] Matt. ii. 16–18.



KUBBET RÂHÎL—RACHEL'S TOMB.

Long after this, when he was about to die in Egypt, Jacob recounts to Joseph the simple and touching story of his mother's death, and his own sore bereavement.[1] The spot was, therefore, known and venerated when Moses wrote the Pentateuch, as it was also centuries later, when Samuel anointed Saul to be king over Israel. Nor has it been lost, forgotten, or its identity questioned to the present day.

Kubbet Râhîl differs in no important respect from the many saints' tombs throughout the land, located like it upon the lonely mountain-side. It has often fallen into ruin, and been restored by

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[1] Gen. xlviii. 7.

Jew or Christian, and even Moslem. It has been repaired since I first saw it, and freshly whitewashed, at the expense, I am told, of Sir Moses Montefiore. It forms an impressive picture, without a human habitation near it, but with the distant village of Beit Jâla upon the slope of the well-wooded mountain across the valley to the west of it for a background.

There is something strange in this burial of Jacob's best-beloved wife by the road-side, in such an exposed and unprotected locality. Why did he not have her body taken to Machpelah, and placed in the sepulchre of his ancestors at Hebron, only a few miles distant, and to which he was himself going?[1]

Even more remarkable, perhaps, is the fact that Joseph, when he came to Hebron to bury his father, did not transfer the remains of his mother to the family sepulchre. He was then lord of Egypt, and could have easily accomplished the removal. There is probably more in this matter than appears on the surface, or is stated in the record. Only three women were buried there: Sarah, Abraham's first and legal wife; Rebekah, the wife of Isaac; and Leah, the first wife of Jacob. Abraham had two other wives, and Jacob three, all of whom were excluded from that patriarchal burying-place. This could scarcely have been accidental.

May there not be found in these exclusions a tacit but impressive protest against polygamous marriages, even such as were tolerated in the households of the patriarchs?

Apart, however, from all such considerations, this universally accepted site has important bearings upon some historical questions of interest. It must have been in this neighborhood that Samuel anointed Saul to be King over Israel, as described in the ninth and tenth chapters of 1 Samuel. We need not attempt to follow Saul's previous wanderings, which would be as useless as his own hunt for the lost asses of his father. It is sufficient for our purpose to notice the termination of his search. He had passed away from the limits of Benjamin southward before he came to the village where the prophet then was. "Now the Lord had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, saying, To-morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel."[1] The place of meeting was not only out of the limits of Benjamin, but in such a position as to bring this sepulchre of Rachel in the line of Saul's return to his home north of Jerusalem, probably at Tuleil el Fûl, now generally identified with Gibeah. This seems to require that the meeting took place southward of Rachel's sepulchre, but at no great distance from it, since it was the first point Saul would come to after leaving Samuel.[2] Saul would no doubt take the most direct route home, for he had learned not only that the asses had been found, but also that his father had become alarmed for his safety.

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[1] Gen. xxxv. 27.

Where, then, was the anointing performed?

No name is mentioned in the Biblical account, but Josephus says it was at Ramah.[3] If this be correct, there must have been a site in this vicinity bearing that name. The fact that no such place is mentioned amongst the cities assigned to Judah in the fifteenth chapter of Joshua is not very remarkable, since even Bethlehem is omitted. The name was a common one, for several Ramahs are mentioned in Joshua; but the anointing of Saul could not have occurred at any of those situated to the north of Jerusalem, or at any place north of Rachel's sepulchre, or distant from it. And though Ramah is not mentioned in the list of villages, yet I think there are elsewhere allusions to it. In fact, they constitute the chief importance and interest of the present inquiry.

In Jeremiah xxxi. 15, we read, "Thus saith the Lord; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted, because they were not." By a bold and striking personification, Rachel is here represented as rising from her sepulchre and weeping over the desolation and ruin of her land and people. The voice was heard *in* Ramah, and it has always seemed to me forced and unnatural to suppose that the place there intended was either Ramah of Samuel or the modern er Râm, both situated several miles north of Jerusalem. Neither of those places had any special connection with Rachel; nor can we see why the thought of them should have occurred to the prophet at all. But if there was a Ramah near Rachel's sepulchre, the association of ideas is perfectly obvious.

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[1] I Sam. ix. 15, 16.

[2] I Sam. x. 2.

[3] Ant. vi. 4, I.

The same considerations apply to the use of this prophecy by Matthew, and imparts verisimilitude to it. Herod, in his wrath, "sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, in Ramah was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children."[1] This, again, is perfectly natural on the supposition that the Ramah referred to was in the neighborhood or "coasts" of Bethlehem, and at no great distance from Rachel's sepulchre. Josephus, therefore, was probably correct in stating that the place where Saul was anointed by Samuel was called Ramah; and the Biblical narratives imply that it must have been near Rachel's sepulchre, and to the south of it. When I first visited Bethlehem my guide took me to a shapeless heap of rubbish between this sepulchre and Beit Jâla, which he said was Ramah; but I could never find any reliable authority for such a locality, and suppose it was invented for my special gratification.

It is time we ride on, even though it is but a little way to come unto Ephrath, the same is Bethlehem.

Is there anything known concerning the origin of the name Ephrath, or of its signification?

It was the ancient or Canaanitish name of Bethlehem when Jacob passed this way, and may mean fruitful. The Hebrew inhabitants still retained the name amongst them at the time of Ruth, as appears from the complimentary benediction of "the people and the elders" upon her marriage with Boaz, to whom they said, "Do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem."[2] The second wife of Caleb was Ephrath, mother of Hur. She, however, could not have given this name to Bethlehem, but may have received her own from it.[3] In the fifty-first verse of the second chapter of 1 Chronicles, Salma is said to have been "the father of Beth-lehem;" but none of these notices explain the origin of either name.

Bethlehem signifies house of bread, or, according to its present Arabic equivalent, Beit Lahm, house of flesh. Both names had reference, probably, to the fertility of the soil.

The village presents a picturesque appearance on the hill-side over against us, and the surrounding fields, and the fig and olive terraces, impart to it a thriving aspect.

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[1] Matt. ii. 16–18.

[2] Ruth iv. 11.

[3] 1 Chron. ii. 19, 50.

Bethlehem is, in fact, one of the largest and most prosperous Christian villages in Palestine. The ridge upon which it is built is about the same height as Olivet, two thousand five hundred feet above the sea-level, but it has no relative elevation over the surrounding hills, and it gradually declines eastward to the large church and convents which form the chief attraction to all pilgrims.[1] Our tents are pitched in a fig-orchard on the north side of the village, and there we will rest before visiting the sites which commemorate the birth of Jesus.

In the field just below the tents is a group of cisterns, hewn in the soft cretaceous rock, and apparently ancient. One of them has been regarded as "the well" for the water of which "David longed," and three of his "mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well and brought it" to him, as recorded in the twenty-third chapter of 2 Samuel. This much may be said in favor of the identity of the site—that it is near what must have been the northern entrance into Bethlehem, where there probably was a gate, and where the Philistines may have stationed a guard when the town was occupied by them. That those cisterns are not wells of living water is not a serious objection, since Bethlehem had no fountains; and the name in the original is beer, a word applied to cisterns, both in Hebrew and Arabic. The "pit" into which Joseph was cast at Dothan was a beer of this kind.[2] Cisterns have generally the demijohn shape, and though not so deep as necessarily to kill those cast into them, it is quite impossible to climb out without assistance from above.

As we drew near Bethlehem to-day my fancy was busy with that little family which more than eighteen hundred years ago approached it along the same road. What a momentous journey was that which brought Joseph and Mary to this city of David that David's greater son might here be born, according to the word of the Lord!

The narrative in the second chapter of Luke for unaffected simplicity is not surpassed by anything even in the most ancient books of the Bible. It requires considerable knowledge of the geography of Palestine, and a decided effort of the imagination, to appreciate or fully comprehend this record. The journey was taken by compulsion. Joseph and Mary were very poor, and must have travelled on foot four days at least, through the miry plain of Esdraelon, and over the bleak mountains of Samaria and Judea.

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[1] See frontispiece to this volume.

[2] Gen. xxxvii. 24.

If our Christmas be rightly placed, the journey was made in the depth of winter.

"Pray ye," says our Lord, "that your flight be not in winter, and woe unto them that are with child in those days." Such was the condition of Mary, and to travel at all must have been a severe trial. To do so in poverty and want, on foot, and in midwinter, was extremely dangerous, and yet not one word of sympathy drops from the pen of the narrator; there is not even the slightest allusion to those perplexing and most distressing circumstances. The simple fact of the journey is stated, and that, when they arrived at Bethlehem, "she brought forth her first-born son, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn." Was ever any great event in the history of man thus recorded? The very simplicity of the story stamps it divine.

The decree of Cæsar Augustus required that "every one" should go "into his own city to be taxed;" is there anything in the civil or political condition of this country that can elucidate this remarkable edict? We have seen what suffering and danger obedience to it occasioned in a single small family, and throughout "all the world" it must have caused somewhat similar misery in hundreds of cases. Gratuitous cruelty was not a characteristic trait of Augustus, and therefore he must have had some important political end in view.

Doubtless the design was to enable him to assess and collect a general tax, much as the Turkish Government has since done in this country. The reason why every one was required to resort to his own city to be taxed may also receive illustration from customs still prevalent. The name of every tax-paying subject is enrolled only in his own village, city, or district, nor is he at liberty of his own accord to change his residence. The civil wars in Lebanon, Damascus, and elsewhere drove multitudes to Beirŭt, and other towns on the sea-board; but their names were still retained on the lists of the places to which they formerly belonged, and they were required to pay their taxes there. In the general confusion of the country, many do not pay taxes anywhere, and the government compels such people either to have their names transferred, or to go "every one into his own city" to be taxed. Nor is the government to blame for pursuing such a course, for so long as the existing mode of raising the revenue is in force, in no other way can it reach those who seek to escape from paying their regular taxes. So far as I can judge, a system very similar has been adopted by every foreign dynasty that has ruled over this country. The Turk has merely perpetuated the plan which he found in operation, and if the present Sultân should issue a decree to-morrow that every one of these Judean mountaineers residing elsewhere should go "into his own city to be taxed," there would be nothing extraordinary in the act, nor anything specially oppressive or unjust.

May 5th. Evening.

I have been quite bewildered by the multitude of sacred localities within and beneath the large enclosures of the convents, and have forgotten most of them.

We first visited the Church of St. Mary, which even in its present condition presents a very impressive appearance. It is believed to have been erected by St. Helena, mother of Constantine, and if so, is the oldest and most venerable specimen of a Christian church in the world. Connected with it are three large convents: that of the Latins, on the north-east; that of the Greeks, on the south-east; and that of the Armenians, on the south-west. These establishments require no special notice. The body of the Church of St. Mary, or of the Nativity, as it is often called, is nearly square, being one hundred and twenty feet long by one hundred and ten feet wide. The nave is about thirty-four feet wide, and there are two aisles on each side of it over twenty-five feet wide, divided by a double row of columns, ten in each row. The columns are marble, with Corinthian capitals, and are nineteen feet high. The ceiling is said to be made of cedar-wood from Lebanon.

The transept has recently been divided off from the nave by a plain wall, and the space within is mainly in the hands of the Greeks. Here are seen a Greek altar, a pulpit, the throne of the Greek patriarch, etc.; there is also an Armenian altar. From the transept various passages lead to the Latin Church of St. Catherine, and to the other convents. Stairways also descend to the Grotto of the Nativity, which is beneath the church. The grotto is pervaded with reverential silence almost oppressive. The crypt where the birth of Jesus is said to have actually occurred is distinguished by a large silver star set in the marble pavement, and around it is the well-known inscription, "Hic de Vergini Maria Jesus Christus natus est." Near by is the manger, or rather the place where it once was, for the real manger was transported to Rome.

INTERIOR OF THE CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY.

Other sacred sites are also pointed out to the devout pilgrim, such as the Altar of the Adoration of the Magi, the spring that burst out of the rock for the accommodation of the Holy Family, the Chapel of the Innocents, slain by Herod the Great, the tombs of Eusebius and Jerome, and the study, or so-called chapel, of Jerome. These latter localities have the special charm of reality and historic credibility about them. We can believe that there the greatest of the Christian Fathers lived, studied, wrote his numberless letters, and, above all in value, translated the Bible into Latin.

Several stairways cut in the solid rock lead up from different parts of the Grotto of the Nativity to the Church of St. Mary above. The Greeks have two, the Latins one, and one at least is closed.

Well, I am glad to have seen that remarkable grotto; but I cannot connect anything I saw there with the birth of Jesus.

Like Horatio in Hamlet, you "will not let belief take hold of you."

I cannot. Everything is cased in marble, covered with silver and gold, surrounded with burning lamps, and pervaded with the odor of incense. There is nothing to remind one of the inn and the manger mentioned by Luke, or of the house, according to Matthew, where the Magi presented their offerings and their adoration to him that was born King of the Jews.[1] As at the Holy Sepulchre, so here everything is overlaid with man's work, and so crowded with "inventions" that faith in the reality of those sites is impossible. Had Bishop Heber ever seen the actual Bethlehem and its sacred sites as now shown in the Grotto of the Nativity, he would not have written:

> Cold on his cradle the dew-drops are shining,
> Low lies his head with the beasts of the stall.

Of that grotto more can be said than of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, for it may be the veritable site of the Nativity. The narrative in Luke connects the birth of Jesus with an inn. Now Bethlehem is not situated upon any great highway or caravan route, and probably there was in it no large inn or caravansary; but, as at present in most villages, there was then, I suppose, a khân or a menzûl, guest-chamber, for the accommodation of the wayfarer and stranger.

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[1] Luke ii. 7; Matt. ii. 11.

Either of these may have been located at the base of the cliff at the eastern end of the village. As is common in such buildings, the upper story is for the accommodation of travellers, while the lower part, with its court protected by a wall, is used for stables.

There was probably an unusual throng of strangers in Bethlehem, gathered there, as were Joseph and Mary, to be enrolled in obedience to the decree of Augustus. The upper rooms of the khân, or the menzûl, were all occupied, and the Holy Family were compelled to accept of some place below with "the beasts of the stall," not an uncommon occurrence in this land, as many a wayfaring man, and every muleteer will inform you. There is no evidence that the birth occurred in a grotto; but even this is possible, and the tradition to that effect dating back to the second century connects it with a cave.

Many inns or khâns have caverns of greater or less extent below them, where cattle and flocks are sheltered, and stone mangers, like those in stables, are built along the walls. Nor is there anything incredible or even remarkable in the statement that the infant Jesus was "laid in a manger." Throughout this country, especially in mountain villages, a part of the one large room in which the native farmer resides is often fitted up with mangers for the cattle; the rest of the room, some two or three feet higher, is arranged for the accommodation of the family. The mangers are built along that elevated platform, and are generally constructed of small stones and mortar, in the shape of a shallow box or trough. Cleaned out and whitewashed, as they often are in summer when not required for the animals, they would make suitable cribs in which to lay little babies. Indeed our own children have slept in them in the rude summer retreats on Lebanon. In such a manger the infant Redeemer may have been laid. On this theory the entire narrative is consistent and natural.

It has been suggested that "the habitation of Chimham, which is by Beth-lehem," mentioned by Jeremiah, refers to the caravansary or khân of Chimham, for those who would "go to enter into Egypt;" and that there may have been, at the time of Christ's birth, an inn built on the same spot at Bethlehem.[1] But this is not neces-

[1] Jer. xli. 17.

sarily implied in the text. Bethlehem never was, and is not now, a point of departure, or a halting-place for caravans or travellers who would "go to enter into Egypt," and this allusion, doubtless, refers merely to the intentions of those fleeing from Mizpah.

But why not leave "the inn" and "the manger" in their original condition?

To some of us that would be far more satisfactory than the present gorgeous display; but a moment's reflection will show that this was impossible. All such inns are ephemeral, and subject to numberless accidents and changes from wars and other destructive agencies. Then, when pilgrimages became numerous, and the rage for sacred relics took possession of the Christian world, everything connected with the birth of the Saviour would have been quickly carried off, if not vigilantly protected. The plans adopted to secure the integrity of the place were in accordance with the spirit of the age. Hence the splendid basilica, and the imposing convent over the sacred site. Nor is it easy to see how otherwise the end in view could have been attained. We may regret the transformation, and must condemn the "inventions" for which there is no authority. Even the Latin inscription in the present Grotto belongs to this category, since it asserts as fact that which must be mere conjecture. But we owe to the pious, though misguided, zeal of its custodians all the knowledge we have of the traditional spot where our blessed Redeemer was born. May we not be carrying criticism too far when it is allowed to deprive us of those emotions which such scenes are apt to awaken?

There is a surprising contrast, however, between the ancients and moderns in regard to the reverence bestowed upon saints' tombs and other sacred sites. Such shrines are now without number, and pilgrimages to them are universal. But nothing of this kind appears in Biblical history. No mention is made of pilgrimages even to the cave of Machpelah. No devout Jew appears to have visited the sepulchres of the Patriarchs, the founders of the Jewish nation.

The same silence is even more remarkable in regard to Bethlehem. Jesus seems never to have visited his own birthplace, though he must have often been in sight of it. His mother could not have forgotten the wonderful incidents connected with her residence here:

the birth of her divine son in a stable; the astonishing report of the shepherds; the coming of the Magi with their offerings and their adoration, and many other things of deepest interest to her. And yet it does not appear that she ever entered Bethlehem after the flight into Egypt. She was often in Jerusalem; probably passed the evening of her life there, and there may have died in the home of the Apostle John. The inference from such facts is clear and decisive that no importance was attached to the birthplace or the sepulchre of saints in those days; no religious reverence bestowed upon them, and no pilgrimages made to them. These customs are wholly post-apostolic, and in manifest antagonism to the faith and the practice of the primitive Church.

Who were the "wise men from the East?"

Ecclesiastical tradition will inform you that they were three in number, all kings, whose precious relics, after many wonderful adventures, were finally deposited in the magnificent Cathedral at Cologne, where they are still shown to the traveller. Patristic mysticism discovered that the gold given by them was an acknowledgment of Christ's kingly character and office; frankincense was offered to him as divine, and myrrh as foreshadowing his sufferings and death. Who and what those Magi really were, and whence they came, is unknown. "The East" is a very vague geographical term, but the name Magi naturally leads one to think of Chaldea or Persia. If not Jews, they probably had become acquainted with the Hebrew Scriptures. Daniel and others of the later prophets and historians frequently mention the Magi; and we know from other sources that there was a numerous caste, or society of them, who monopolized the learning and wisdom of "the East," resembling in this respect, as in others, the priests of Egypt. They were held in great estimation, and consulted even in reference to important affairs of state. But they became corrupted by wealth and power, and in their hands science itself was degraded, astronomy degenerated into astrology, chemistry into alchemy, and both were made subservient to soothsayers, jugglers, and mountebanks. Hence the words magi, magicians, and magic came to be used only in a bad sense.

It is a fair inference, from the narrative in Matthew, that there were some amongst the Magi of a different character from that of the community with which the name associates them; and the universality of the kingdom of Christ is beautifully symbolized in this remarkable embassy from the distant East. These Magi may stand as the representatives of the whole Gentile world divinely sent to honor the advent of the Son of God. His star appeared to them in the direction of Jerusalem, and thither they came to do homage to the new-born King. From thence it led them to Bethlehem, where he was found and worshipped by them. That a star should guide to that promised "Star out of Jacob," that should arise and shine upon Israel was eminently appropriate:[1]

Brightest and best of the sons of the morning!
  Dawn on our darkness, and lend us thine aid;
Star of the East, the horizon adorning,
  Guide where our Infant Redeemer is laid.

Several of the incidents mentioned in the Bible as more or less closely connected with Bethlehem are sad and even painful. Not to refer again to the death of Rachel or the murder of the "innocents" by Herod, the very first name in the list of her citizens is associated with the fatal apostasy of Israel into idolatry. In those days of anarchy, when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes," but which was generally wrong, a young Levite of Bethlehem wandered away northward to Mount Ephraim in search of employment, and found it in the house of Micah, whose not very creditable character and conduct are described in the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters of Judges. He stole eleven hundred shekels of silver from his mother, then restored them to her, and between them they "made thereof a graven image and a molten image. And the man Micah had a house of gods, and made an ephod, and a teraphim." And in the end the Levite became his priest. Not lóng after, there came along that band of Danites that conquered and settled in Laish, and called it Dan. They took with them this Levite, very glad to go; "and they set them up Micah's graven image." This apostasy became permanent, and lasted until the day of the captivity of the land.

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[1] Numbers xxiv. 17.

The next incident connected with this place is even more tragical. A certain Levite married a concubine out of Bethlehem, whose terrible story is related in the nineteenth and twentieth chapters of Judges. Indirectly she became the cause or the occasion of the almost total extermination of the tribe of Benjamin.

Then follows the story of Ruth, beginning in famine, emigration, poverty, and the death of Elimelech and his two sons, and ending in the return of Naomi, the bereaved wife and mother, back to Bethlehem, accompanied by her devoted daughter-in-law, Ruth the Moabitess, who became the wife of Boaz, the grandfather of David, and one of the ancestors of David's greater son, our Blessed Lord and Saviour. The Book of Ruth is an exquisite idyl, which cannot be epitomized without marring its unequalled beauty and pathos. It is amusing, however, to read it in the cold and stately narrative of Josephus. He seems reluctant to include it in his history; but because of her relation to King David, who "left his dominions to his sons for one-and-twenty generations," he says: "I was therefore obliged to relate this history of Ruth, because I had a mind to demonstrate the power of God, who without difficulty can raise those that are of ordinary parentage to dignity and splendor, to which he advanced David, though he was born of such mean parents."[1]

The character of both Naomi and Ruth, as it is brought out by a few brief touches, needs no apology from anybody. I can never read the first chapter of that little book without emotion. Is there anything through the range of all literature more touching than the answer of Ruth to the expostulations of Naomi: "Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law. And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."[2]

The story of Ruth abounds in allusions to customs primitive and Oriental, some of which are vividly illustrated by the manners and

[1] Ant. v. ix. 4.

[2] Ruth i. 15–17.

habits of the present inhabitants. Were this the proper season of the year, you would see the reapers in the fields with their crooked sickles cutting the barley, and, following them, women and children gleaning and gathering "after the reapers among the sheaves," as the maidens of Boaz were doing when he came from Bethlehem to look after his reapers. And in the evening you might find some weary maiden, that had been permitted to glean on her own account, sitting under an olive-tree or by the way-side, and beating out with a stick or a stone what she had gathered, just as did Ruth the Moabitess.

Indeed, the scenes connected with the interviews between Boaz and Ruth might be enacted here to-day with but trifling variations. The salutations that passed between Boaz and his reapers are literally the same as those in use at the present day. "The Lord be with you," is merely the "Allah m'akum" of ordinary custom; and so, too, the response, "The Lord bless thee."[1] Again, it is implied that there was a large company of reapers, and that the reaping season was prolonged for a considerable time; for it is added that Ruth continued "to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest," which are quite distinct, occur in the order here stated, and are protracted through several weeks.[2] It is further intimated by the tenor of the story that the reapers were apt to be rude in their deportment towards defenceless females, and hence Boaz commanded them to behave respectfully to Ruth; and he told her also not to fear, for he had taken care that she should not be insulted. Such precautions are not out of place at this day. The reapers are gathered from all parts of the country, and largely from the ruder class, and, being far from home, throw off all restraint, and give free license to their tongues.

The meals, too, are quite in keeping—the dipping her morsel in the vinegar, and eating the parched corn.[3] Harvest is the time for parched corn. It is made thus: a quantity of the best ears, not too ripe, are plucked with the stalks attached. These are tied in small parcels, a blazing fire is kindled with dry grass and thorn bushes, and the corn-heads are held in it until the chaff is mostly burned off. When the grain is sufficiently roasted, it is rubbed out in the

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[1] Ruth ii. 4.

[2] Ruth ii. 23.

[3] Ruth ii. 14.

GLEANERS OF BETHLEHEM

hand, and eaten as there is occasion. When travelling in harvest-time, my muleteers have very often thus prepared parched corn in the evenings after the tent has been pitched. Nor is the gathering of the green ears for parching regarded as stealing. Parched corn is referred to in the Bible, and it is a favorite article all over the country. So, also, I have often seen the muleteers, as we passed along the wheat-fields, pluck off ears, rub them in their hands, and eat the grains, unroasted, just as the apostles are said to have done.[1] This also is allowable. The Pharisees did not object to the thing itself, only to the time when it was done. They said it was not lawful to do this on the Sabbath day. It was work forbidden by those who, through their traditions, had made man for the Sabbath, not the Sabbath for man.

Again, I have on various occasions seen the owners sleeping on the summer threshing-floors to prevent stealing, just as the wealthy Boaz did when Ruth came to him.[2] Though it is not customary for women to sleep at those floors, and to do so would produce the same unfavorable impression which Boaz apprehended, yet it is not unusual for husband, wife, and all the family to encamp at the baider, threshing-floor, and remain until the harvest is over.

Boaz measured six measures of barley and put it into Ruth's veil.[3] Barley is, in fact, very often eaten by the poor in Palestine; and as to the veil, you have only to look at those still worn by the women to understand what kind of article is referred to in this story. It is merely a long piece of cotton cloth, and I have often seen it used for just such service as that to which Ruth applied hers.

In view of the impropriety of women resorting to the baider at night, how did Boaz reach the conclusion expressed by him: "All the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman?"

Weeks had passed since the first interview between Boaz and Ruth, and he had no doubt become well assured of her irreproachable character. He also probably knew that, in the present instance, she acted in obedience to the instructions of her mother-in-law, who had taught her that she not only had a right to claim Boaz for her husband, but that she was precluded by the law of Moses from forming any other reputable connection. Boaz also remembered that he was old, she young and attractive, and, though from the heathen Moabites, yet she preferred to walk in the sober path of honest married life rather than to associate with the thoughtless and the gay. He was, therefore, fully justified in ascribing to this very act an honorable and virtuous principle, notwithstanding the apparent violation of modesty and propriety; and in this he judged correctly. Ruth manifested true modesty and virtue, therefore, by claiming that to which she was entitled, and to which, in truth, she was bound by the law of God. That she applied to the wrong person was through the mistake of her mother-in-law.

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[1] Matt. xii. 1, 2; Mark ii. 23, 24; Luke vi. 1, 2. [2] Ruth iii. 6, 7. [3] Ruth iii. 15.

Is there anything in modern customs amongst the Arabs to illustrate the singular act of pulling off the man's shoe who refused to marry his brother's widow?

This matter is passed over very mildly in the Book of Ruth, for it appears to have become common to omit the severe features of the law as laid down in Deuteronomy xxv. 7–10, where the details are harsh enough certainly. When a man publicly refused, "in the gate" of the city, to take his deceased brother's wife, then she "shall come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house. And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed." In the case of Ruth these offensive actions were omitted, possibly in consideration of the facts that the man in question was not Ruth's husband's brother; that she was an alien and a foreigner; that he could not fulfil the law without injuring his own family; that there was another, the next of kin, who was more than willing to take his place, and also that Ruth wished to avoid any unnecessary publicity in the transaction. So much of the law, therefore, only was observed as was necessary to confirm the transfer of the marital rights to Boaz.

In regard to modern customs, there is a phrase in use amongst the Moslems which may possibly owe its origin to this law of Moses. When one divorces his wife, he says of her, She was my babûj, slipper, and I cast her off. In both the law and the proverb the babûj represents the woman and her matrimonial rights and claims. It is one thing, however, for a man to kick off his slipper in disgust, and quite another to have it plucked off in scorn and contempt by the insulted woman, especially if she should spit in his face, and fasten upon him in Israel the nickname Beit Khabûtz-hanaal, the house of him whose shoe is loosed. In any event, the comparing of woman to a slipper is not very complimentary to the sex, but it is eminently Oriental, and it is a deplorable fact that all her marriage rights can be cast off, like a worn-out babûj, at the caprice of her heartless lord and tyrant.

Many years ago I saw a woman in great rage pluck off her old shoe, and, spitting on the sole of it, shake it frantically in the face of her antagonist; and I was once riding in company with a native over a rough road on Lebanon, whose horse continually exercised his patience by stumbling. At length it fell flat down, pitching him over its head. Mad with rage and pain, instead of beating the animal with his stick, as Balaam did his ass, he began to spit in its face, striking it at the same time with his shoe, and displaying every possible mark of extreme disgust.

Spitting at or upon a person or thing has been the mode of expressing the utmost contempt from very ancient times. In Numbers xii. 14, the Lord is represented as saying to Moses, in reference to his sister Miriam, "If her father had but spit in her face, should she not be ashamed seven days?" a rather severe and prolonged penalty. It is, however, still an intolerable insult, and you may thus interpret the spitting upon the ground by fanatical Moslems as we pass them. They dare not do more, or we should have it in our faces! When I first came to this country respectable native Christians assured me that, until the Egyptian army occupied Syria, they could scarcely walk the streets without being spat upon by Moslems, and it cost the life of not a few of these fanatics before this vile custom could be eradicated; and it would be revived in many places the very first day it could be done with safety. Could you understand the expressions with which we are often assailed, especially in Moslem villages, you would sigh for the stern rule of Egypt's warlike Pasha, by which he enforced his edicts for the protection of Christians.

II.

BETHLEHEM TO EL BÎREH.

Beit Sâhûr, the Shepherds' Fields.—Shepherds' Grotto.—Wilderness of Judah frequented by Shepherds.—David and Eliab.—The Fields of Boaz.—Bethlehem and its Inhabitants. — Protestant Schools. — Moslem Quarter destroyed by Ibrahim Pasha. — Manufacture of Religious Relics.—Women of Bethlehem.—Bethlehem the City of David.—Psalms of David.—David and Achish.—City of Adullam.—Cave of Adullam.—Terebinth-tree in the Valley of Elah.—Beit Jâla.—Taxes and Taxation, Ancient and Modern.—Wady el Werd.—Distillation of Rose-water in Jerusalem.—Legend of the Rose. —Wady Bittîr, Site of Bether.—Bar-cochaba.—Rebellion of the Jews under Hadrian. —'Ain el Hanîyeh, St. Philip's Fountain.—Baptism of the Eunuch.—'Ain Kârim, City of Zacharias.—Yŭtta, Juttah.—St. John in the Wilderness.—Visit of Mary to Elisabeth. —Church of St. John.—Kŭlônieh not Emmaus.—Wady Beit Hanîna.—El Kŭstŭl, Castellum.—Boundary of Judah.—Sôba, Zuph.—Kuryet el 'Enab, Kirjath-jearim.—Abu Gaush.—The Ark brought to Kirjath-jearim.—Gibeah, "the Hill."—Sacred Retreats on Hill-tops.—Baalah.—House of Aminadab.—Hebrew Y'ar and Arabic W'ar.—Church of St. Jeremiah.—Omnibus from Jerusalem to Jaffa.—Ancient Highways.—Modern Gibeonites.—Kefîr, Chephriah.—Night Adventure in the Time of Ibrahim Pasha.—Neby Samwîl not Mizpeh.—Ramah of Benjamin.—The Prophet Samuel.—Extensive View from the Minaret of the Mosk.—Sepulchre of Samuel.—El Jîb, Gibeon.—El Balû'a, the Pool in Gibeon.—Abner.—Joab.—Amasa.—David's Instruction to Solomon concerning Joab.—The Tabernacle at Gibeon.—Solomon's Sacrifices, and his Choice of Wisdom.—The Treachery of Ishmael.—The Modern Village of El Jîb.—Large Caravan of Camels.—"The Way down to Beth-horon."—Upper and Lower Beth-horon.—Biblical Notices of Beth-horon.—Overthrow of the Amorites.—Command of Joshua to the Sun and Moon.—View of the Country around Beth-horon.—Merj Ibn 'Omeir, the Valley of Ajalon. — Yâlo, Ajalon.—Beit 'Ûr el Fôka, Upper Beth-horon.—Jeb'a, Gibeah of Saul.—Tuleil el Fûl, Mizpeh.—Scopus.—Josephus's Account of the Lot of Benjamin.—Er Râm, Ramah of Benjamin.—Deborah the Prophetess.—Biblical Allusions to Ramah.—View from the Ridge above Er Râm.—Reflections upon leaving Jerusalem and its Sacred Scenes.

May 6th.

I HAD the pleasure, during an early ramble, of seeing the gray dawn brighten into a glorious morning over the so-called Shepherds' Fields. The air was cool, fresh, and fragrant after the slight rain that fell during the night, and everything around me seemed happy and gay "with charm of earliest birds." My young guide led me over low walls, down steep terraces, and across stony fields for half an hour to a small hamlet called Beit Sâhûr, where tradition says the shepherds dwelt to whom the angels, in the beautiful language of St. Luke, announced the birth of the Redeemer. "There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them."[1]

Shepherds were leading forth their flocks to pasture—always a pleasant sight, but there doubly interesting and suggestive.

The grotto, where it is said the angels appeared to the shepherds, is some distance eastward of Beit Sâhûr, in a small olive-orchard. A descent of twenty-one steps leads down to a subterranean chapel, which now belongs to the Greeks. The tradition regarding this site is quite ancient, and in past centuries various ecclesiastical buildings were erected over it, all of which have now disappeared, leaving but few traces of their existence.

What authority is there for the traditions respecting those sites?

Nothing Biblical, of course; but the location is sufficiently probable, if the Grotto of the Nativity be rightly placed at the eastern end of the ridge upon which Bethlehem is built. And this is somewhat strengthened by the fact that most of the country in that direction belonged to the wilderness of Judah, immediately above and west of the Dead Sea, a region which must always have been occupied as sheep-walks, since it is not capable of profitable cultivation. Bedawîn shepherds still wander over those bleak and barren hills with their flocks, and it was probably through that same region that the youthful David "went forth to feed his father's sheep;" for when he came to Saul's army, in the valley of Elah, his brother Eliab asked, in angry rebuke, "Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness?"[2] In that same wild country, David would also, most likely, have met the "lion and a bear," which he slew in defending his charge.[3]

Parts of the surrounding terraces near Beit Sâhûr are clothed in the spring with wheat and barley, and it is certainly possible that,

[1] Luke ii. 8, 9.

[2] 1 Sam. xvii. 28.

[3] 1 Sam. xvii. 34-36.

according to the tradition of the fathers, these were the fields of Boaz, where Ruth the Moabitess was permitted to glean after his reapers.

Apart from the convents, grottoes, and Shepherds' Fields, there is little of special interest in or around Bethlehem. It is about as large now, I suppose, as it ever was, since there are no indications that it at any time extended much beyond the present limits. Located on a narrow rocky ridge, running nearly due east and west, and not over a mile in length, Bethlehem could never have expanded into a large city. It has not a single fountain, and, although the aqueduct from the Pools of Solomon reaches the southern base of the ridge, and is there tapped for the use of the inhabitants, the supply would have been inadequate, especially when the water from the pools was conducted to Jerusalem. The present population is estimated at over four thousand, mostly belonging to the Greek Church. The Latins and Armenians are connected with the convents, and there are a few Protestants who have flourishing schools for boys and girls.

On my way back this morning from the shepherds' fields I passed through the village, and was both surprised and delighted to hear some of Moody and Sankey's familiar hymns very energetically sung in a school for young girls. They were occupied with their morning devotions, so I did not disturb them by entering the school-room; but the incident proved that a fair degree of religious toleration is enjoyed in this village where our common Redeemer was born.

Curiously enough, the only exception is in the exclusion of the Muhammedans from the place. When I first came here, in 1833, there was a large Moslem quarter, but this was destroyed by Ibrahim Pasha in the following summer, because the Moslems of the town were amongst the leaders in the rebellion against the Egyptian government; and now, if the Sultân himself, the Emir el Mûminîn, should visit Bethlehem, he would not find any mosk in which to perform his devotions.

The inhabitants are, in general, industrious, and, for this country, enterprising. In addition to agricultural pursuits and pastoral life, they are largely engaged in manufacturing for the pilgrims beads,

THE SHEPHERDS' FIELDS.

crosses, and other relics of olive-wood, mother-of-pearl, and coral from the Red Sea; cups, candlesticks, and the like, of rose-colored breccia from Hebron, and of the black Hajr Mûsa from the region above the Dead Sea. They exhibit considerable skill in carving Scriptural and legendary scenes upon their handiwork, and the Jerusalem market is overstocked with their productions.

By general consent the women of Bethlehem, especially the younger ones, are reputed to be exceptionally handsome, and it is even claimed for them that they have Saxon blood in their veins, dating back to the days of the Crusades. They certainly have but little of that reserve which leads Moslem women to hide their features behind impenetrable veils.

Jerusalem was the city of Solomon, but at Bethlehem David is the great historic character. Here was born and bred the father of devout religious poetry, and his name has made this village and the mountains around it classic ground.

That is eminently true; and it is no exaggeration to say that the sweet singer of Israel has exerted a wider influence upon mankind than any other amongst the sons of song, and this influence will continue to expand and deepen to the end of time. The Psalms of David and his sacred hymns have been more frequently quoted and sung than those of all other poets in the world. Countless numbers of the human race have been comforted, strengthened, and helped to fight out the battle of life to final victory, with the spiritual weapons of the Hebrew psalter; and with thoughts and expressions from these divine songs, they have passed triumphantly through the dark valley to the light and rest of heaven. This is fact, and not fancy; and it is commendation that cannot be accorded to any other poet, heathen or Christian, in any age or country.

Is it not probable that the drapery and figurative costume of many of the psalms were suggested by the scenes and the scenery with which David was associated in the hill country of Judea, where he performed so many of his illustrious actions, and experienced such marvellous deliverances from the hands of his enemies?

It could not be otherwise. The words of David, and the figurative titles given by him to Jehovah in the eighteenth Psalm, for example, were manifestly suggested by the wild, rocky scenery of that region, where he spent so much of his outlaw life, and was so wonderfully "delivered from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul." We learn from the title to the thirty-fourth Psalm that David wrote it to commemorate his escape from extreme danger, "when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed."[1] The incident referred to is recorded in the twenty-first chapter of 1 Samuel, where the king, before whom David "feigned himself mad," is called Achish, which appears to have been a common name for the kings of Gath. "Have I need of mad men," said Achish, "that ye have brought this fellow to play the mad man in my presence? shall this fellow come into my house?" David, therefore, departed thence, and escaped to the cave of Adullam.[2]

The officers of the Palestine Exploration Fund have found a ruin, now called Khŭrbet esh Sheikh Mudhkûr, and also 'Aîd el Mîyeh, or the Feast of a Hundred, not far from Socoh, and east of Tell es Sâfieh, which they believe marks the site of Adullam. How do you regard this identification?

Much of the ancient topography of that region is still obscure, but there was, no doubt, a city of Adullam somewhere between Bethlehem and Gath. In the Onomasticon it is said to have been ten miles eastward of Eleutheropolis, Beit Jibrîn, which would locate it about midway between that place and Bethlehem. This city of Adullam is often mentioned in the Old Testament;[3] and so late as the time of the Maccabees it was a strong place, to which Judas retired after his victory over Gorgias.[4] That Khŭrbet esh Sheikh Mudhkûr occupies the site of the city of Adullam I am not prepared either to affirm or deny. The position answers well enough, especially if we accept the proposed identifications in that region: Beit Jibrîn for Libnah, Kila for Keilah, and Kussah for Achzib. But there is no resemblance between the names Adullam and Mudhkûr, meaning "the noted one," nor are the caves at the latter place sufficiently large to accommodate the growing army of David.

There is no necessary connection, however, between the city of

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[1] Psalms xxxiv. title.

[2] 1 Sam. xxi. 15; xxii. 1.

[3] Josh. xii. 15; xv. 35; 2 Chron. xi. 7; Neh. xi. 30; Micah i. 15.

[4] 2 Macc. xii. 26–38.

Adullam and the cave to which David resorted when he escaped from Achish.

Nor is it probable either that he would select a position so near Achish, and where he would be surrounded on every hand by enemies, for a retreat in which he might safely receive all that resorted to him, and organize them into a formidable warlike band. I think that Mughâret Khŭreitûn, south-east of Bethlehem, is the only cave yet discovered that could furnish the needed stronghold for David and his little army of zealous followers.

BUTM WADY SÛR—CITY OF ADULLAM.

But though it may not include the cave, the site of a city so ancient as Adullam is invested with much interest, and Mr. Clermont Ganneau and Captain Conder may well feel gratified with the identification, should it stand the test of future criticism.

The surrounding country is crowded with historic names, and beyond and below the Wely of Sheikh Mudhkûr the valley of Elah, where the youthful David slew Goliath, spreads out westward to the plain of Philistia. From the large terebinth-tree in the wady, known as Butm Wady Sûr, and quite celebrated in that region, the supposed identified site of the city of Adullam is seen on the summit of the hill in the distance.

This neighborhood must have been frequently visited by David, and it requires no great stretch of the imagination to fancy the royal poet seated beneath the shade of such a tree, and singing to his harp in memory of his escape from what he seems to have regarded as the greatest peril of his life. "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears."[1]

If we follow the route selected last night to Kuriet el 'Enab, and thence to el Bîreh through the territory of the ancient Gibeonites, we shall have a long ride to-day.

And a rough one over roads not much frequented, and it is time we were in the saddle. Our first point is 'Ain Kârim, believed to be the Karem of the Septuagint and Jerome, and the path thither will lead us across the plain of Rephaim or the valley of the giants, below Beit Jâla.

It appears to great advantage, extending along the eastern slope of the mountain, and surrounded by vineyards, and orchards of olive, fig, and other trees.

By some it has been identified with Zelzah, mentioned by Samuel in connection with Rachel's sepulchre.[2] If this is correct, then the lands of that place must have extended down to her tomb, which would thus be near or "at Zelzah." It has also been suggested that Beit Jâla may be the Giloh given to Judah, and the possible birthplace of Ahithophel the Gilonite.[3] But Giloh belonged to a group of towns southward of Hebron, and could not have had any connection with Beit Jâla. Though not Biblical, nor distinguished for any historical incident, it is a pretty and flourishing village, numbering about three thousand inhabitants, mostly of the Greek Church. It is also a favorite summer resort of the clergy from the Holy City.

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[1] Psalms xxxiv. 3, 4.

[2] 1 Sam. x. 2.

[3] Josh. xv. 51; 2 Sam. xv. 12.

Dr. Robinson's guide through this part of the country belonged to Beit Jâla, and he furnished the Doctor with a terrible list of taxes and "contributions" paid by his village to the Egyptian Government. Besides the regular governmental taxes, the kharâj, firdeh, and a'aneh from individuals, each she-goat and ewe was taxed; and so was every donkey, mule, horse, and camel. Every yoke of oxen was charged one hundred and fifty piastres, every olive-tree was taxed, and upon every feddân, about half an acre, of fig orchard or vineyard thirty piastres were levied, and the village had to pay two thousand five hundred piastres for wine and 'arak for home consumption, whether they made and drank any or not. The guide, of course a poverty-stricken peasant, in these and other methods paid about fifteen dollars yearly.

I well remember the crushing exactions of the government at that time, and the despair of the poor peasants. There were then but few Franks in the country, and all were supposed to be consuls or officers of European nations, possessing great influence over the Egyptian government. My associate, Mr. Nicolayson, returning from the Pools of Solomon in company with Mr. Farran, the British Consul, was met as they entered Bethlehem by crowds of despairing petitioners, who, in urging their supplications, spread their loose cloaks in the road before the horse of the consul. Though that action was prompted by extreme distress, still it recalls that similar incident during the triumphal entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem. In both cases the spreading of garments "in the way" was intended to express the utmost respect, honor, and even reverence. Just such manifestations are now rare, but conduct analogous to them has always been common in Oriental countries. Any one familiar with the "Arabian Nights" will remember like scenes described in that wonderful collection of romantic stories. Even at this day respectable people will resort without hesitation to the most abject actions, postures, and expressions to render their appeal for aid or protection more emphatic.

It seems to me that the taxes levied by these Oriental governments are far more numerous, vexatious, and tyrannical now than were those in ancient times, at least amongst the Israelites, for no such exactions are mentioned in Biblical history.

Special details are not given by the sacred writers, and yet the picture of monarchical rule which Samuel held up before the Israelites to dissuade them from electing a king implied an amount of sore oppression in many respects equivalent to that which prevails at the present day.

"This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you," said the prophet. "He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots. And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your olive-yards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you."[1]

No doubt the taxation of modern Oriental governments is far more grinding and ruinous than anything known to the Jews, and no other explanation is needed of the sad condition of this country at present, both physical and moral, than that fact. The ways in which a bad government can corrupt, debase, and impoverish its people are innumerable. Every item in the list of taxation, furnished by the man from Beit Jâla, for example, is a temptation to deceit, bribery, and oppression. The true number of sheep and goats will never be given. The olive and fig trees will not be correctly numbered, or they will be cut down, and so on through the entire catalogue. The tax-payer will understate with shameless perjury;

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[1] 1 Sam. viii. 11–18.

the tax-gatherer will overvalue to an exorbitant degree, in order to extort more than is lawful, or he will take a bribe to conceal what is due.

Although some of the items in the inventory of Dr. Robinson's guide have been dropped in the miserable regime of this day, new ones have taken their place; the system in force is the same, and the pernicious effects of it permeate and thoroughly vitiate all classes of the people from the lowest to the very highest. Still, in spite of this misrule and oppression, the country is improving. Dr. Robinson mentions several villages, then deserted, that are now occupied; and there is reason to believe that this improvement will be permanent.

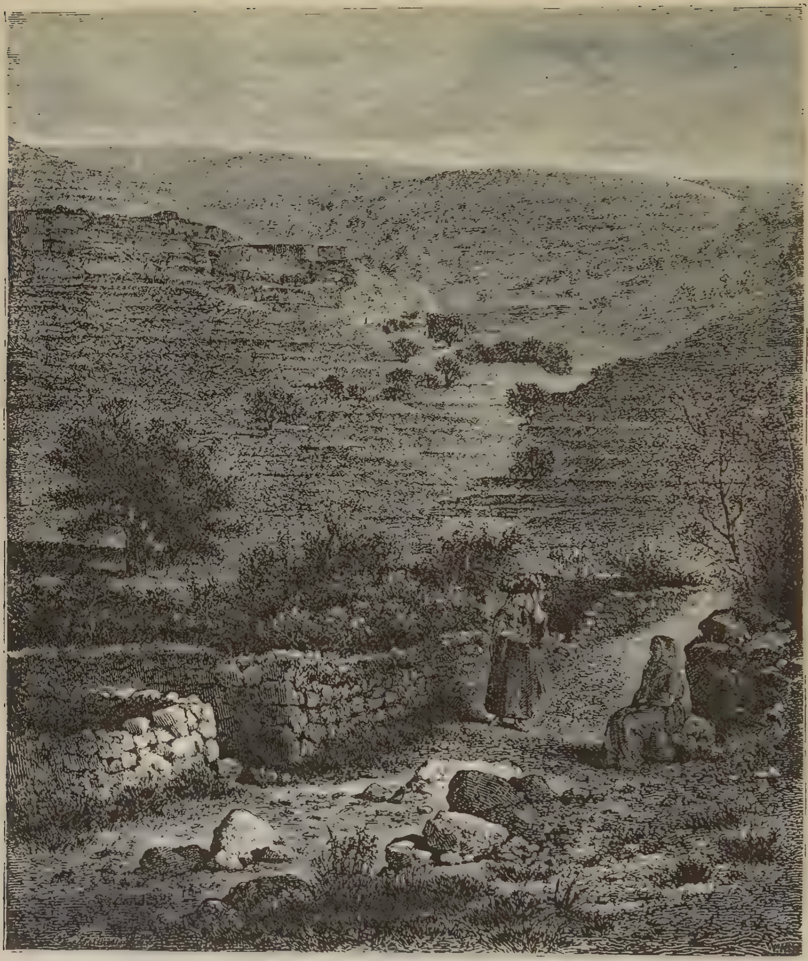
What is the name of the valley we have just crossed?

Wady el Werd, valley of roses, so-called from the rose-gardens farther up towards the Convent of the Cross. The natives of this country are extremely fond of flowers, and the rose is queen of them all in their estimation. Attar of roses is not manufactured in Jerusalem; but, during the season, one meets women and children carrying loads of blossoms on their heads to the city, where the flowers are distilled into rose-water, and a favorite confection is made of the rose petals.

That early traveller, Sir John Maundeville, gives the following account of the origin of roses, which he places at or near Bethlehem: "A fair maiden was blamed with wrong, for which cause she was condemned to be burnt; and, as the fire began to burn about her, she made her prayers to our Lord, that, as truly as she was not guilty, he would, by his merciful grace, help her, and make it known to all men. And when she had thus said, she entered into the fire, and immediately the fire was extinguished, and the fagots that were burning became red rose-bushes, and those that were not kindled became white rose-bushes, full of roses. And these were the first rose-trees and roses, both white and red, that ever any man saw."

This pretty legend is, I suppose, a fair extract from Sir John's notes of travel in this country.

The region to the west and south-west of us is very rough, and intersected by numerous wadys which descend to the plain and unite with Wady Sŭrâr, the scene of the return of the ark. These



BITTÎR—BETHER.

branch valleys have local names derived from villages in and about them. One which comes down north-west, from the neighborhood of Beit Jâla, is called Wady Bittîr, from the village of that name situated on the hill-side. Tell Bittîr, a short distance to the north-west, with a ruin upon it called Khŭrbet el Yehûd, ruin of the Jews, is believed by some to mark the true site of that Bether where was enacted the last scene in the bloody tragedy of Bar-cochba early in the second century. Lieutenant Conder remarks that "the neighborhood of Bether (Bittîr) suggests a possible connection with Bar-Chozeba (perhaps named from the town of Chozeba, now *Khueizîba*, about seven miles farther south), called by his followers Bar-Chochebas, 'Son of the Star.'"

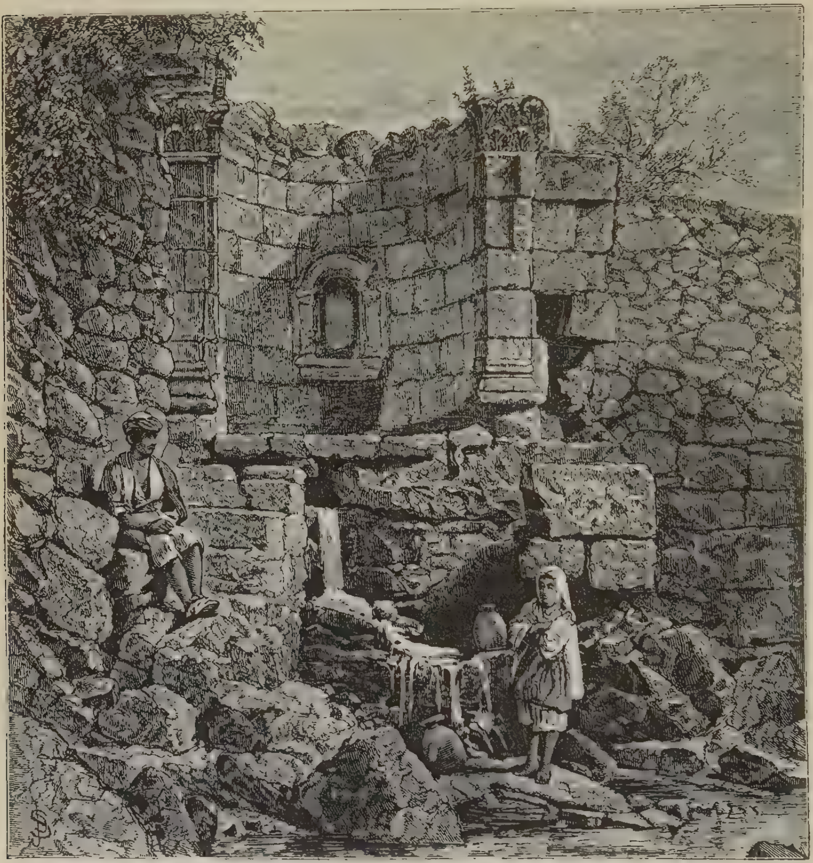
I have an indistinct recollection of the history of that desperate revolt of the Jews against the Roman government.

It was evidently a very serious affair; and, even after the recapture of Jerusalem and the death of Bar-cochba, it took Julius Severus, Hadrian's general, more than three years to capture the strong fortress of Bether. The most extravagant fables are related by Jewish writers in regard to the number massacred at the storming of Bether. The horses of the Romans, we are told, were up to their girths in blood. An innumerable multitude fell in this war: Dio Cassius says five hundred and eighty thousand by the sword alone. The Emperor Hadrian resorted to the most cruel measures in order to extinguish forever the hopes and aspirations of the Hebrew nation; and to this end he built a new Jerusalem; made it a Roman colony, and called it Ælia Capitolina. No Jew was allowed, on pain of death, to enter it; and heathen temples were erected upon its ancient, venerated, and sacred sites; and for many years the very name of the Holy City disappeared from the page of history.

From the fact that the Jews were able to raise an army of two hundred thousand men, and to resist for over three years the strength of Rome, I think we may conclude that Josephus greatly exaggerated the destruction of his nation by Titus.

The rebellion of Bar-cochba occurred only sixty years after the time of Titus, and, considering the small size of this country, it is incredible that such a rebellion as that could have been organized and sustained if the Jews had been so completely destroyed as Josephus asserts. To me it is always a source of real gratification to find reason to diminish the numbers said to have perished on such occasions, not only by the Jewish historian, but also by other writers, both sacred and profane.

Some distance west of us—to change the subject—is the village of el Welejeh, and near it is a fountain called by the natives 'Ain el Hanîyeh, and by monkish legend St. Philip's Fountain, where he baptized the Ethiopian eunuch. But the mention of Gaza, and afterwards of Azotus, Ashdod, in the narrative of that event, naturally suggests the plain of Philistia, and I agree with those who place the baptism at no great distance from Ashdod.



'AIN EL HANÎYEH—ST. PHILIP'S FOUNTAIN.

The fine fountain of 'Ain el Hanîyeh was once adorned with an edifice apparently a church. Two pilasters, with Corinthian capitals, flank a semicircular apse formed of large hewn stones, and the water gushes out from under a niche in the apse, and falls into a small basin below. Escaping thence between large rocks and fallen blocks of stone, it finds its way down the valley. There are also fragments of columns lying about the fields, and heaps of stones indicating the existence of other buildings in former times. Indeed, that entire region, rough and broken though it be, is crowded with ancient sites, but none of their names connect them with Biblical history.

What authority is there for identifying 'Ain Kârim, which we are now approaching, with the city of Zacharias and Elisabeth?

None that I know of, except that it was "in the hill country of Juda."[1] It has been regarded as the true site for nine or ten centuries at least, and there is no rival whose claims for the honor are better sustained. Some critics have asserted that the word Juda in the text was the name of the city, and not that of the tribe of Judah, and they identify that place with Juttah, a site several miles south of Hebron, at Yŭtta. To this there are obvious objections, both from the position and the dissimilarity of the names.

Nor can I believe, as others maintain, that the city in question was Hebron, for, in that case, there is no conceivable reason why it should not have been mentioned by its own well-known name. If 'Ain Kârim is rejected, we shall probably not be able to identify either the birthplace of the Baptist and Forerunner of Christ, or the retreat where the mother of Jesus abode with her cousin Elisabeth during those trying three months which followed the discovery of her condition by her affianced husband.[2] I incline, therefore, to accept this retired and pretty village of 'Ain Kârim "in the hill country," the modern St. John in the Wilderness, for the nameless city of Judah. And I indulge the pleasing thought that here the Virgin Mary found refuge and sympathy in time of need; that here, also, was first sung that glorious Magnificat, which has in all after-ages delighted and edified the Christian Church: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation."[3]

I am glad we have included the place on our route, and shall hereafter associate the first chapter of Luke's gospel with one of the most picturesque villages in this region.

Forty-five years ago 'Ain Kârim was nearly deserted, and the buildings about the sacred localities were in a state of wretched neglect. The Franciscan monks have now restored all the dilapi-

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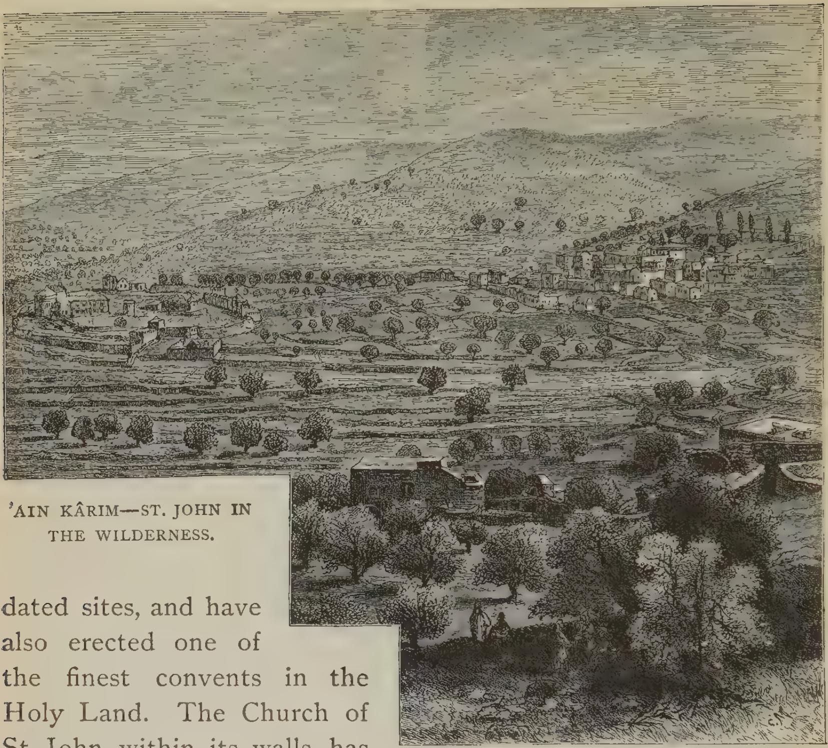
[1] Luke i. 39.
[2] Luke i. 56.
[3] Luke i. 46–55.



'AIN KÂRIM—ST. JOHN IN THE WILDERNESS.

dated sites, and have also erected one of the finest convents in the Holy Land. The Church of St. John, within its walls, has the nave, aisles, dome, and interior arrangements common to such edifices, and needs no particular description. The crypt, where, according to tradition, the Baptist was born, is worth visiting, on account of the marble sculptures which represent various incidents in his history. But, as at Bethlehem and elsewhere, marble casing entirely hides the native rock, and the same remark applies to St. Mary's Well, and other sites transformed and concealed.

The dwelling-house of Zacharias has been erected since my first visit, and the entire appearance of the place is so changed for the better that I can scarcely recognize in the flourishing village of nearly a thousand prosperous inhabitants, with its impressive monastery, the all but deserted hamlet of 1834.

The name 'Aịn Kârim means fountain of the vineyards, and the rough hill-sides above and south of it are clothed in many places with flourishing vines, which conceal much of their native ruggedness. It has, of course, its own share of miraculous legends; but, leaving them to those who have more faith, we will prosecute our ride westward, and descend into the deep Wady Beit Hanîna, through olive-groves, which rise from the bottom of the valley terrace above terrace, quite up to the village.

Looking up the valley northward, that half-ruined village seated on the mountain-side is called Kŭlônieh. What its ancient name may have been is not known, but assuredly it was not the Emmaus of the New Testament, as some have supposed. It may have been the ancient Koulon of the Septuagint and Jerome. Where the present carriage-road from Jaffa to Jerusalem crosses the valley below it are heavy old foundations, and in connection with them a modern way-side inn has been established, to which people from Jerusalem frequently extend their evening rides. It is not more than an hour and a half from the city, and plenty of good water is found, as the weary pilgrim and many a thirsty traveller will gratefully remember.

We have now a long and steep ascent from the bottom of Wady Beit Hanîna to el Kŭstŭl, and midway up our path will bring us into the carriage-road.

The name Kŭstŭl, like Kŭlônieh, is evidently derived from the Latin, and therefore not Biblical.

The site, however, is doubtless ancient, but what its original name was has not been discovered. The Romans probably built a castle here, in order to command the great highway from the coast to Jerusalem; and this is one of the few cases in which the foreign has superseded the older native name. The village is in a ruinous condition, and amongst the dilapidated houses are seen a few large stones which may have belonged to the Roman Castellum. The boundary between Judah and Benjamin, I suppose, followed nearly the line of the present carriage-road just visible in the valley below us, at least as far westward as to Kuryet el 'Enab, to which place we shall come in about another hour.

Crowning a lofty conical mount a short distance to the southwest of el Kŭstŭl is Sôba, evidently an ancient site, and with a name sufficiently like Zuph, to which Saul came in his search for his father's asses, to countenance the identification. In the Biblical narrative the place is called "the land of Zuph," but there was doubtless a city of the same name, which may well have occupied that conspicuous position.[1] It overtops all the surrounding hills, and the outlook in every direction is extensive, and surprisingly varied.

EL KŬSTŬL—CASTELLUM—THE BOUNDARY OF JUDAH.

Our road now descends westward for more than a mile to a small wady called el Ghŭrâb, where a tiny brook flows southward under a low bridge, possibly Roman, and certainly ancient. On the east bank of the stream is another way-side inn or café, where I have repeatedly rested and taken my lunch. We shall not stop there this time, for Abu Gaush, as Kuryet el 'Enab is now called by the natives, is only a few minutes' ride farther on, and there we shall lunch, for it is the limit of our day's travel in that direction.

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[1] 1 Sam. ix. 5.

Abu Gaush, "the father of Gaush," was a famous robber chief who had his seat in that village during the early part of this century, and was virtually master of the surrounding country. He levied blackmail on all pilgrims to the Holy City, and was quite too powerful for the then, as now, feeble Turkish Government. My earliest associate in this land, the Rev. Isaac Bird, was, with several other gentlemen, English and American, detained a prisoner in the Latin Convent of Jerusalem itself by Abu Gaush, nor could they leave the city until a ransom had been paid to him. His name was still a terror to pilgrims when I first visited the Holy City, although Ibrahim Pasha had broken up that nest of robbers, and dispersed the large clan of whom he was the chief.

Nothing more strikingly indicates the change for the better in the condition of this country than such incidents. No one could then reside outside the walls of Jerusalem for fear of those lawless robbers, nor were the city gates kept open after sunset. All is sufficiently peaceful at present, and the country to the south and east of the village abounds in noble fig and olive orchards, and wide-spreading vineyards.

How was it ascertained that Kuryet el 'Enab is the modern representative of Kirjath-jearim?

The identification is due to Dr. Robinson, and the arguments in favor of it are quite satisfactory, and have met with general acceptance.[1] Kirjath-jearim is frequently mentioned in the Bible from the time of Joshua, who assigned it to Judah, to the days of Jeremiah.[2] In the twenty-sixth chapter of Jeremiah and twentieth verse it is mentioned as the home of Urijah, the son of Shemaiah, who prophesied in the name of the Lord against Jerusalem. Nehemiah states that seven hundred and forty-three men of Kirjath-jearim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, all three cities of the Gibeonites, returned to their homes from the Babylonian Captivity.[1] But the one incident that imparts Biblical celebrity and interest to that place is the reception of the ark by the inhabitants when it was brought up from Beth-shemesh, and its continuance there for twenty years in the house of Abinadab.

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[1] Rob. Res. vol. ii. pp. 11, 12.

[2] Josh. xv. 9, 60.

The verbal formulas employed in the brief account of that event indicate that the writer was perfectly familiar with the topography of this region. "The men of Beth-shemesh sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, saying, The Philistines have brought again the ark of the Lord; come ye *down*, and fetch it *up* to you. And the men of Kirjath-jearim came, and fetched *up* the ark of the Lord, and brought it into the house of Abinadab *in the hill*."[2]

This was perfectly natural, and imparts verisimilitude to the whole narrative. Beth-shemesh is at the foot of the mountain south-west of Kirjath-jearim, and there is a long descent to it of not less than ten miles through a wild and rugged region. The Hebrew word rendered "in the hill" is Gibeah, and in the account of the transfer of the ark to Jerusalem, given in the sixth chapter of 2 Samuel, that word is not there translated, but stands as a proper name. "They brought it [the ark] out of the house of Abinadab that was *in Gibeah;*" and the next verse reads, "they brought it out of the house of Abinadab which was *at Gibeah*.[3] In each case the word is identically the same, and I suppose it was the name of a dependent suburb of Kirjath-jearim, occupied by the Levitical family of Abinadab, and apart from the confusion and impurities of the village, so that it was the most appropriate sanctuary for the sacred ark.

Such secluded retreats are still found connected with villages all over this country. They are commonly located on hill-tops above the village to which they belong, and are generally devoted to religious purposes, as I suppose Gibeah was at Kirjath-jearim. I have visited many of these retired sanctuaries often, and the Biblical narrative under consideration suggests just such a site. It may even have been one of the religious sanctuaries of the ancient Gibeonites, and its original name probably was Baalah, for it appears from Joshua xv. 9, that Baalah was one of the names of Kirjath-jearim; and in the sixtieth verse of the same chapter it is also called Kirjath-baal. We may suppose that the Israelites changed the heathen name of Baal to that of Gibeah, and thus the existence of a Gibeah is accounted for, and a place provided in Kirjath-jearim for the ark, and the worship of the true God.

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[1] Neh. vii. 29.

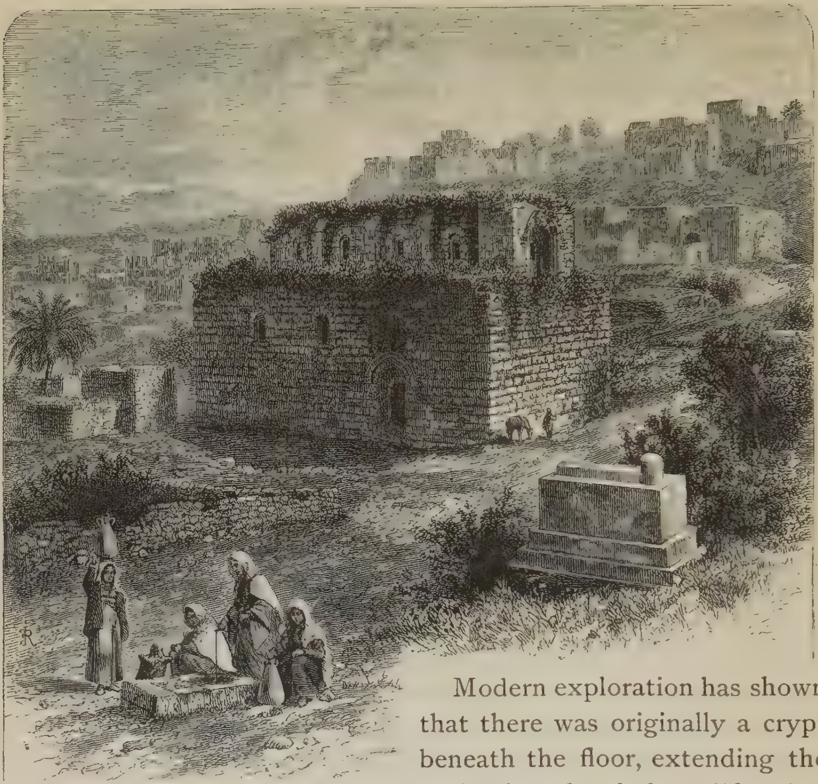
[2] 1 Sam. vi. 20, 21; vii. 1, 2.

[3] 2 Sam. vi. 3, 4.

It is quite possible, also, that the reason why the men of Beth-shemesh selected that rather than any other village was because there existed there a well-known sanctuary occupied by the Levitical family of Abinadab. That such a sanctuary should be perpetuated by the Israelites, even though it came to them through the Gibeonites, is in perfect accord with Eastern customs, both ancient and modern. Similar shrines in this land are frequented by all classes and denominations, and such places are rarely destroyed or desecrated.

The ancient Hebrew title of this place of many names signified city of forests, or, rather, of tangled woods or thorny thickets, which appears to have been the specific meaning of y'ar, the root of yeärim′-jearim, as it is also of the Arabic equivalent w'ar. My own wanderings over the rocky region to the west and north-west, brought me into bewildering contact with some of the thorny thickets which still justify the original designation of yeärim′. In subsequent times, when vineyards became the characteristic feature of the place, the name was changed to Kuryet el 'Enab, village of grapes, but the first person you meet on the road will tell you that it is also called Abu Gaush.

The houses of the modern village are substantial stone structures, picturesquely grouped upon ascending terraces south of the carriage-road from Jaffa to Jerusalem. The only ancient edifice is the large church which was erected by the Crusaders, and dedicated to St. Jeremiah, from a mistaken belief that this was the site of Anathoth, the birthplace of that prophet. The church is about one hundred feet long and sixty wide, divided into nave and aisles by six square pillars, three on each side, which support the arches of the lofty vaulted roof. The walls appear to have been ornamented with frescoes and mosaics. It used to be occupied as a stable, and so filthy had it become that it was quite impossible to examine it, and in that condition it remained for several years. I have repeatedly ridden into it, and forced my way through a herd of unruly cattle.



KURYET EL 'ENAB—KIRJATH-JEARIM.—
CHURCH OF ST. JEREMIAH.

Modern exploration has shown that there was originally a crypt beneath the floor, extending the entire length of the edifice, but which was mostly filled up with rubbish. The church has passed into the hands of the Latins, who have cleaned it out, and repaired the windows and main entrance. We must seek admission through the courtesy of the custodian. The water from the village fountain flows through a vegetable garden south of the church, where you will also notice a few palm-trees; and to the north is the tomb of the robber chief, Abu Gaush, with a well or sebîl close by.

There comes the daily wagon or omnibus, as it is called, from Jerusalem to Jaffa—an apparition the like of which even Solomon, in all his glory, never saw.

Neither have I seen anything exactly similar. It is not a stage-coach nor a diligence; but, though no such wagon traversed these hills and mountains in ancient times, there must have been carriage-roads, and wheeled vehicles passing up and down between the two cities, even in Solomon's day. How else could the cedar-trees for the Temple, sent to Joppa by Hiram, King of Tyre, have been transported to the Holy City?

Without stopping to discuss the various methods of transportation employed by the ancients, there is no reason to doubt that there were, from very early times, highways upon which carts and chariots could and did pass to and fro, from the seaboard and the great plain to Jerusalem and other mountain cities and towns.

Matters of this nature are generally mentioned incidentally in the Bible, yet we know that at the time of Samuel and Saul, for example, the Philistines came up even to Michmash, east of Bethel, with a large number of chariots. They may have ascended Wady 'Aly to this Kuryet el 'Enab along the line taken by the present road, and thence across the country to Gibeon, as we now propose to do, for it is high time to resume our day's ride through this wild region of the old Gibeonites. We will visit Neby Samwîl on our way to el Jîb, passing through a wild region which extends from this village of Abu Gaush north-eastward quite to el Bîreh, where we are to find our tents and pass the night.

That little caravan of modern Gibeonites, which we have just passed, with their "old sacks," and lean donkeys loaded with brushwood and dry roots for the Jerusalem market, formed a picturesque incident often met with in this region.

I am glad to have witnessed it, for it suggests to my mind the quaint narrative in the ninth chapter of Joshua. Without much aid from the imagination, one can readily discover very plausible Gibeonites in that rude and ragged rabble from Abu Gaush. True, they had water-bottles instead of those "wine-bottles, old, and rent, and bound up;" but they showed striking specimens of "old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them."

It is quite possible, I think, that these people are in reality the remote descendants of those Hivites who "did work wilily" to deceive the elders of Israel, and in punishment of their deceit were condemned by Joshua to be "hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the Lord."

We do not, I believe, pass the site of Chephirah, the fourth city of the Gibeonites.

There is a ruin there now called Kefîr, and it lies several miles to the west of the line we must follow to reach Neby Samwîl. My recollections of that region are both extremely vivid and sad. In the troubled year of 1834 Kefîr was deserted, as were many other mountain villages, for fear of the Egyptian soldiers, who had just then been let loose upon them in punishment for their rebellion. I had been detained upon the plain for many anxious weeks by this revolt of the mountaineers, unable to return to my family in Jerusalem, or even to get a letter to or from them.

At length, after Ibrahim Pasha had fought his way up from Ramleh through Wady 'Aly to Jerusalem, I procured a guide, who engaged to take me by an unfrequented way to that city. As the attempt was considered dangerous, we were obliged to travel in the night, and I shall ever remember the experience and the sensations of that dismal ride. We entered a mountain defile somewhere between Jimzu and 'Amwâs shortly after sunset, and got on well enough for two or three hours. After that, a dense fog shut out the starlight, and enveloped the mountains in total darkness—a darkness that might be felt. Utterly bewildered, the guide soon lost the path, and, after more than one narrow escape from falling headlong over frightful precipices, we were compelled to lie down upon a broad shelf of rock, and wait and "watch for the morning," before we could venture to resume our ride. Passing deserted Kefîr, and leaving Neby Samwîl on the north, we crossed the deep Wady Beit Hanîna above Lifta, and entered Jerusalem in safety.

Nor can I forget the distressing scenes which preceded and followed that memorable ride. Jerusalem itself had been plundered, both by the rebels and the Egyptian army. Repeated earthquakes had nearly destroyed many dwellings, including my own. The plague raged amongst the inhabitants, and death had desolated many homes. But there is no occasion now to dwell upon such details.

Neby Samwîl, the Prophet Samuel, with its historic memories and sacred associations, is here before us, and we must spend some time in surveying the vast panorama visible from the minaret of the dilapidated mosk, an admirable "watch-tower," which crowns the summit of the ridge. The site itself is some three thousand feet above the level of the sea, and towers over the surrounding hills, affording an outlook unequalled in Biblical interest by any other point in this region.

Dr. Robinson was the first, I believe, to identify this site with the Mizpeh of Samuel.

Many learned and careful students do not agree with him, and are inclined to identify the place with Ramah of Benjamin. Indeed, few questions in Biblical topography present more perplexing problems than those which beset the identification of either Mizpeh or Ramah. The name Mizpeh signifies "watch-tower," or outlook, and was applied to several places, both east and west of the Jordan; while there were many Ramahs scattered far and wide over the whole country. The name Ramah is not now applied to any site in this immediate neighborhood, but a very early tradition makes Neby Samwîl the birthplace, the home, and the burial-place of the prophet. His venerated name was given to it, while that of Ramah was allowed to disappear, since there were many Ramahs, but only one prophet Samuel, and to him the place owed all its importance and celebrity.

The sacred history enables us to limit the inquiry to this region, for there is no evidence that Samuel ever resided elsewhere. That there was a Ramah in Benjamin, and located somewhere in the district of the Gibeonites, is stated in Joshua xviii. 25, and elsewhere. It seems natural to suppose that it was the residence of Elkanah, to which place he returned from Shiloh, with Hannah his wife, the mother of Samuel. There the prophet was born; and it was to Ramah that, after completing his official yearly "circuit to Beth-el, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh," he returned, "for there was his house;"[1] there the tribes assembled at the summons of Samuel on great national occasions; there he judged Israel during his long and eventful life, and there "Samuel died; and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah."[2] These Biblical notices are perfectly distinct and satisfactory, and I am willing to accept the identification and indulge the fancy that to this magnificent outlook on Neby Samwîl the great Prophet of Israel often resorted, and looked out upon this landscape, so suggestive of topics for solemn meditation.

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[1] 1 Sam. i. 19, 20; vii. 15–17.

[2] 1 Sam. xxv. 1.

Dr. Robinson says it is the most sightly place in all Palestine. According to Dean Stanley, it was, as the residence of Samuel, both significant and suggestive, for "it overlooks the whole of that broad table-land on which the fortunes of the Jewish monarchy were afterwards unrivalled. Its towering eminence, from which the pilgrims first obtain their view of Jerusalem, is no unfit likeness of the solitary grandeur of the Prophet Samuel, living and dying in the very midst and centre of the future glory of his country."[1]

What a number of interesting objects and sites, near and far away! Those cloudlike mountains which bound the eastern horizon, on the other side Jordan, must belong to Gilead and Moab.

Were the atmosphere transparent, as it sometimes is, I could point out to you eastward Pisgah, "where Moses stood and viewed the landscape o'er." It is directly above the north-eastern corner of the Dead Sea, and when there, I saw with distinctness this little minaret where we now stand, though it was thirty miles distant as the crow flies. To-day the expanses southward and westward are more beautiful, and the most sharply defined. The entire land of Philistia down to Gaza, on the extreme south, lies outspread like a variegated map, and beyond it the blue Mediterranean floats away westward to meet and mingle with the hazy horizon.

We must now leave this most impressive outlook, and, though it may mark the site of Ramah and not that of Mizpeh, no place in the country could more appropriately bear that name.

It is truly a natural watch-tower; but since some are inclined to reject the identification of Dr. Robinson with Mizpeh of Samuel, where would you locate that place?

We will resume the question farther on during our ride; in the mean time let us examine the interior of this mosk, and the box-like enclosure which is supposed to protect and conceal the sepulchre of Samuel. It is the only thing of interest at this forlorn hamlet. There are not wanting, however, in the immediate surroundings sufficient evidence to prove that the site is very ancient. The

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[1] Stanley's Jewish Church, vol. ii. p. 454.

NEBY SAMWÎL—RAMAH OF BENJAMIN.

soft cretaceous rock has been cut and quarried extensively, and in some places forms the walls of the adjacent houses. The village is one of the smallest and most squalid that even this poverty-stricken land can show, yet, strange to say, it is well provided with good water; and since the ridge is much higher than the surrounding country, one is puzzled to account for its two fountains, or to understand how they are themselves fed.

The mosk was, doubtless, originally a Christian church, probably erected by the Crusaders, but on a more ancient site. According to Lieutenant Conder, "It was cruciform in plan, with a sort of side building added on the north of the nave, although it is doubtful whether any corresponding structure was built on the south. The south transept is perfect, with a Mohammedan niche in its walls [for prayer]; the north [transept] has been filled up with irregular cells of Moslem work. The choir probably terminated in an apse; but this is quite destroyed, and a modern wall cuts short the edifice."

The next place on our route for to-day is el Jîb, which is about a mile and a half nearly due north of Neby Samwîl, and several hundred feet below it. I once walked to there direct from this place through the ploughed fields, and found considerable difficulty in clambering over and down the stony terraces near the village.

What is there in the history or the position of el Jîb to merit attention or call for special examination?

By universal consent, it occupies the site of the famous Gibeon, "a great city, like one of the royal cities," which was the political head of that confederacy of Hivites who so cleverly entrapped Joshua into a covenant of peace with them; and from that early day to the present it has never disappeared from the page of history. This pre-eminence and vitality was owing mainly to its peculiar situation. It occupied a strong position on the hill south of the great highway from the interior to the plain and the sea-board at Jaffa, and so near the only pass over the mountain as completely to command it. We need not now recall the familiar story of the Gibeonites, but Gibeon was subsequently brought into very prominent connection with the people of Israel on various occasions.

A short distance east of the village is a fountain within a cave of considerable size, which appears to have been excavated under the rock; and not far below it, amongst the olive-trees, are traces of an open pool, about one hundred and twenty feet in length by one hundred in breadth, designed possibly to receive the surplus water of the fountain. It, however, does not now overflow, nor is there any apparent connection between the fountain and the pool. Dr. Robinson and others are disposed to find in this reservoir the celebrated "pool of Gibeon."

Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake, of the Palestine Exploration Fund, in his description of el Jîb, says: "The present village is situated on the northern and smaller top of the double hill which, shaped like a figure 8, lies in a kind of basin north of Nebi Samwîl. This basin is a tract of fertile ground, producing pears, grapes, figs, almonds, etc., in addition to the usual ground crops and olives, formed by an eccentric water-shed which, beginning at the head of Wady Selaian [Suleimân], in the first instance flows due east, then, turning southward round Bir Nabala, passes Lifta and 'Ain Kârim, and eventually reaches the Mediterranean near Yabneh. The heads of this wady to the north of el Jîb are called Wady Askar and Wady Hammúd, which latter comes down from the north-east of Beit Unia, divided by a low water-shed from an upper valley, a rise in the bed of which forms a barrage. Above this a pool covering some six to eight acres, to a depth of ten feet, is found during the winter. It is termed el Balúa, 'the sink.'"

That pool may have both a tragic and historic interest. There possibly occurred the first blood shed in the long war between David and the house of Saul. "Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon. And Joab the son of Zeruiah, and the servants of David, went out, and met together by the pool of Gibeon: and they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool. And Abner said to Joab, Let the young men now arise, and play before us. And Joab said, Let them arise. Then there arose and went over by number twelve of Benjamin, which pertained to Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and twelve of the servants of David. And they caught every one his fellow by the head, and thrust his sword in his fellow's side; so they fell down together: wherefore that place was called Helkath-hazzurim [the field of strong men], which is in Gibeon. And there was a very sore battle that day; and Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel, before the servants of David."[1]

I am inclined to inquire whether the Balû'a may not also be the modern representative of "the great waters that are in Gibeon."

Gibeon is connected with another bloody tragedy. King David, on his return to Jerusalem after the rebellion of Absalom had been quelled, made Amasa commander-in-chief over his army. This greatly offended Joab, and when some time afterwards they met, in pursuit of the rebellious Sheba, the son of Bichri, "at the great stone which is in Gibeon, Joab said to Amasa, Art thou in health, my brother? And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him. But Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab's hand: so he smote him therewith in the fifth rib, and struck him not again; and he died."[2]

That treacherous murder David could neither forget nor pardon, and in his parting instructions to Solomon he commands him to punish it. "Thou knowest what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me, and what he did to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and unto Amasa the son of Jether, whom he slew, and shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that was about his loins, and in his shoes that were on his feet. Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace." And when "Joab fled" to Gibeon "unto the Tabernacle of the Lord, and caught hold on the horns of the altar," Solomon ordered Benaiah to fall upon him there, and slay him.[1]

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[1] 2 Sam. ii. 12–17.

[2] 2 Sam. xx. 8–10.

Thus ended the career of that sturdy old warrior, the steadfast, though ambitious and unprincipled, general of David. It adds solemn emphasis to the providential retribution that overtook Joab, that it was at Gibeon, and not far from "the great stone," perhaps, where he had perpetrated that treacherous murder of Amasa, that he himself was slain by the command of Solomon.

At the time of David and Solomon, the Tabernacle with its altar of sacrifice appears to have been there, for in the very beginning of his reign Solomon "went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place: a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar. In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. And Solomon said, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing."[2] Alas! that the sun of so bright a morning should go down in perplexity and impenetrable gloom.

Long after these events we read of "the great waters that are in Gibeon," to which the treacherous Ishmael "carried away captive all the residue of the people that were in Mizpah, even the king's daughters, and all the people that remained in Mizpah," in order to go over with them to the Ammonites, as recorded in the forty-first chapter of Jeremiah.

There is very little to distinguish el Jîb from other mountain

[1] 1 Kings ii. 5, 6, 28–34.

[2] 1 Kings iii. 4–10.

EL JÎB—GIBEON.

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villages of the same class. The houses in some places rise one above the other like steps, commanding an extended view over the meadow-like plain and the rocky hills below. They are built of stone, roughly laid up, and amongst them are seen blocks that have an antique appearance, and probably belonged to a more ancient Gibeon. The remains of an old castle still attract attention. The lower rooms were vaulted, and the upper are still nearly entire; the whole building presents a very respectable appearance.

The road leading over this pass and down the mountains seems to be much frequented, for we have met more than one company of peasants with their mules and donkeys since we came upon it.

It is the shortest way to Jaffa for the people of this region. They are obliged in the spring to purchase wheat and barley to supply their wants until the harvest has been gathered. The first part of the road down the pass is steep and rough, and the hard limestone rock has been cut away in broad steps, which in some places have been worn so smooth as to be extremely dangerous to both the horse and his rider.

It is curious how a trivial incident in the experience of the past will cling to one's memory. The first time I came up this road from Jaffa, many years ago, midway between Upper Beth-horon and el Jîb, in the narrowest and most difficult part of the pass I encountered a long and straggling drove of camels—more than five hundred—which Ibrahim Pasha had brought from the Arabs east of the Jordan, in order to transport provisions and war material for his army. Though I have since seen many thousand camels in one caravan of the Wuld 'Aly—some said fifty thousand—that sight did not affect my imagination to an equal degree. Those five hundred loose camels, with their Bedawîn drivers shouting to them at the top of their voices, came lunging and plunging down the rocky path in wild confusion; and my terrified horse becoming quite unmanageable, rushed away amongst the rocks, to the no slight danger of breaking his own neck and that of his rider.

A very emphatic testimony, I should judge, to the truth of the ancient statement that it was impossible to employ cavalry against camels.

The average Arab horse will not charge a camel, and for good reason. With his long neck and prodigious mouth the camel can inflict a fatal bite, while the horse is unable to defend himself or injure his assailant.

It was down this pass, I suppose, which we have just left, and where you were charged and routed by the camels, that Joshua chased the five kings of the Amorites "along the way that goeth up to Beth-horon."[1] That name and place is closely connected with the history of the children of Israel, from a very early age down to the time of the Maccabees. What is its present condition?

There were two Beth-horons, you will remember—the upper and the nether. From Joshua xviii. 11, 13, 14, it would appear that they belonged to Benjamin; but in chapter xxi. 22, it is said that Beth-horon was assigned to the Levites. Subsequent to the time of Joshua the references to them are few, and of no great importance. In 1 Chronicles vii. 24, we read that Sherah, the daughter of Beriah, "built Beth-horon the nether and the upper," which can only mean that she repaired or rebuilt them, since they existed long before her day. Solomon also rebuilt them, and fortified both "with walls, gates, and bars."[2] They do not again appear in strictly Biblical history, but they figure largely in the wars of the Maccabees, and are repeatedly mentioned by Roman writers about the beginning of our era. The Apostle Paul was, probably, conducted down that pass of Beth-horon and in the night, when on his way from Jerusalem to Cæsarea.[3]

It was perhaps from some prominent point on the ridge of Upper Beth-horon, that commanded a view up the mountain towards Gibeon and down the valley of Ajalon, that Joshua surveyed the total overthrow of the Amorites, and their disastrous flight "before Israel in the going down to Beth-horon," when "the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died: they were more which died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword. Then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, and hasted not to go down

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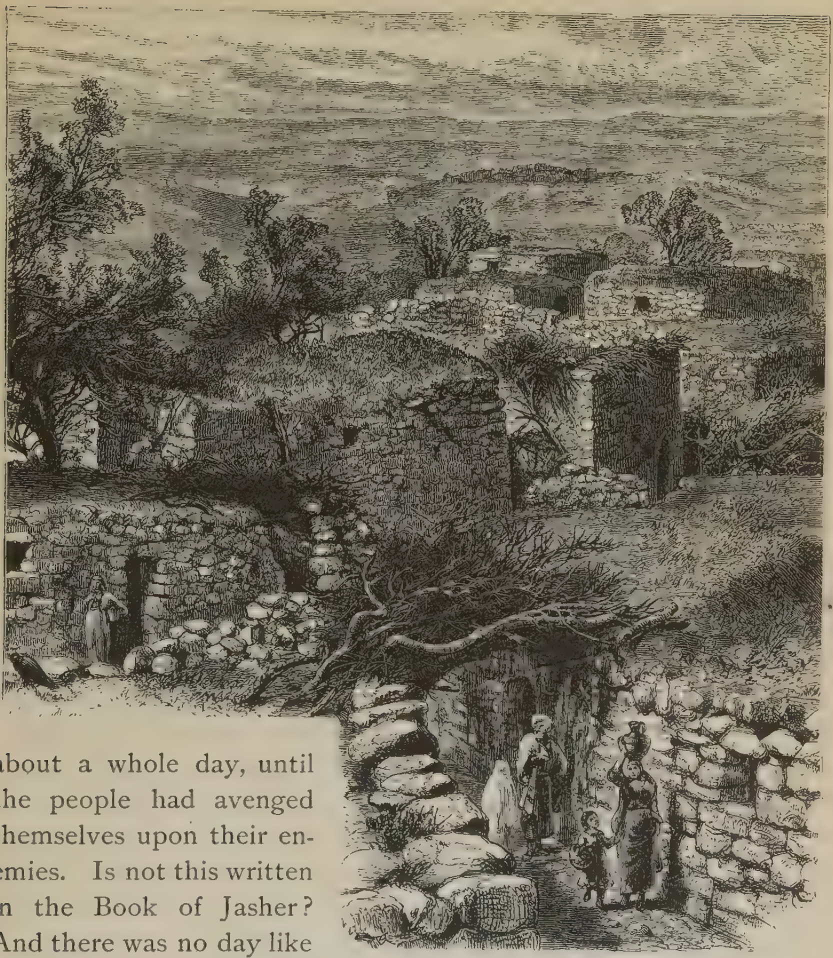
[1] Josh. x. 10.

[2] 2 Chron. viii. 5.

[3] Acts xxiii. 31, 33.



BEIT 'ÛR EL FÔKA—UPPER BETH-HORON.

about a whole day, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the Book of Jasher? And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the Lord fought for Israel."[1]

Dr. Robinson says: "From the roof of a house we had a wide and very distinct view of the country around Beth-horon and towards the sea. The prospect included the hill country and the plain as far on the right and left as the eye could reach. The prominent towns were Ramleh and Lydda; we could not make out Jaffa. Between us and Ramleh we looked down upon a broad and beautiful valley at our feet, formed by the junction of Wady Suleimân, the wadys on the north and south of Beit 'Ûr, and others."[1]

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[1] Josh. x. 11–14.

The present Arabic name of that wady, or rather plain, is Merj Ibn 'Omeir; doubtless the valley of Ajalon, so famous in that glorious victory of Joshua over the confederate kings of the Amorites. The identification is perfectly satisfactory, and agrees with both the Biblical indications of this topography and with the statements of Eusebius and Jerome in the Onomasticon. The name Ajalon is perpetuated by that of Yâlo, a small hamlet on the hill-side south of the valley.

The modern names of the Beth-horons are Beit 'Ûr el Fôka and Beit 'Ûr et Tahta. Fifty years ago both were nearly deserted, but the upper one has been somewhat improved of late, though it is still a wretched hamlet. It is built in a commanding position upon the eastern declivity of a high ridge, with deep valleys on each side of it. There are traces of walls and ancient foundations in the village, and below the hill on which it stands is an old reservoir. The only pleasant memory I can associate with the Upper Beth-horon is that I once found refuge from a burning sirocco in an ancient vaulted passage, or chamber, at that place. The entire ride from Lydda to that village and on to el Jîb was singularly dreary and barren. Most of the villages with which the surrounding region was once crowded have disappeared, leaving scarcely a trace of their existence.

We must quicken our pace towards el Bîreh, or darkness will overtake us before we reach our tents. Had time permitted, we might have followed the great northern highway to Bîreh from Jerusalem. It passed Scopus and Tuleil el Fûl, which Dr. Robinson and others have identified with Gibeah, the home of King Saul. This, however, has been rejected by recent explorers, and for reasons which render the identification at least doubtful. Tuleil el Fûl means "the Little Hill of Beans;" a name which gives no indication of any Biblical site, nor do the ancient remains upon the Tuleil countenance the idea that it was the place of residence of Israel's first king.

Lieutenant Conder of the Palestine Exploration Fund is inclined to locate Gibeah of Saul at or near the present Jeb'a, identified with

[1] Rob. Res. vol. ii. p. 253.

the ancient Geba. The similarity in the names is strongly in favor of this theory and against Tuleil el Fûl, since, if the latter was Gibeah, there would then have been three cities near together, and in sight of each other, bearing radically the same names, Gibeon, Gibeah, and Geba—a conjunction without example, and one likely to prove in practice a source of confusion.

If not Gibeah of Saul, with what place would you associate Tuleil el Fûl?

It would accord with the judicial circuit of Samuel to make that place the site of Mizpeh, to which the prophet returned on his way back to his home from Gilgal. It appears to be clearly implied from the sacred narrative that Mizpeh was a different place from Ramah, to which he came before he reached his home in Ramah. He went first northward to Beth-el, thence to Gilgal, near Jericho, and from there he came back to Mizpeh. "And his return was to Ramah; for there was his house."[1] Tuleil el Fûl was well calculated to be the central watch-tower for all this part of the country, and might very appropriately be called Mizpeh.

I notice that Dean Stanley, Dr. Bonar, and others select Scopus for the site of Mizpeh.

And they may be correct, though there is no commanding Tell at that place to suggest a name signifying watch-tower. The name Scopus, like its present Arabic representative Sha'fât, is of comparatively modern origin, while Mizpeh was a well-known site, and a place of general concourse, in this neighborhood at least, as early as the time of Samuel, long before Jerusalem had become of sufficient importance to give name to any spot merely because from it persons coming from the north there obtained their first view of the Holy City.

This part of the "lot of Benjamin" appears to have been densely populated, to judge from the many deserted sites so close together, and it is now more forlorn and desolate than almost any other district which we have traversed.

Your remark reminds me of what Josephus says about this region: "As to the Benjamites, their lot fell so that its length reached from the river Jordan to the sea, but in breadth it was bounded by

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[1] 1 Sam. vii. 16, 17.

Jerusalem and Bethel; and this lot was the narrowest of all, by reason of the goodness of the land, for it included Jericho and the city of Jerusalem."[1] This "goodness of the land" reads strangely to one familiar with its present condition. It is not only the narrowest, but also the most barren. The situation of the territory of Benjamin was in fact unfortunate; a long irregular strip, wedged in between the two great tribes—Judah on the south, and Ephraim on the north—it was at an early day entirely absorbed by them, and quite lost its independence and separate existence. No doubt much of the soil was naturally fertile, and when under careful cultivation extremely productive; but it is just that kind of territory which most rapidly falls into sterility and decay when neglected.

With the exception of Jerusalem, which practically belonged to Judah, there is not now a single large village in that entire lot of Benjamin; and this er Râm, which we are approaching, is a good specimen of them all. Amongst the prostrate ruins of the old town of Ramah which this modern village represents there are, as you see, a few wretched habitations. Ramah could never have been a great city, though some broken columns and large stones built into the walls of the modern native houses indicate that at a former period there were buildings here of considerable importance.

Er Râm is doubtless the site of one of the Ramahs assigned by Joshua to Benjamin; and in Judges, "Deborah, a prophetess," is said to have "dwelt under the palm-tree, between Ramah and Beth-el, in Mount Ephraim."[2] In the sad story of the Levite and his concubine that place is mentioned in immediate connection with Gibeah, implying that the two places were near each other; and this agrees well with the idea that the present Jeb'a occupies the site of Gibeah.

From 1 Kings we learn that "there was war between Asa and Baasha, king of Israel, all their days," and Baasha "went up and built Ramah, that he might not suffer any to go out or come in to Asa." But his own kingdom being invaded by Ben-hadad, king of Syria, he was compelled to abandon his position at Ramah. "Then king Asa made a proclamation throughout all Judah: none was exempted, and they took away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha had builded; and king Asa built with them Geba of Benjamin and Mizpah."[1] If er Râm is that Ramah, then this bit of history probably accounts, in part at least, for the present condition of the place, though it continued to be inhabited even after the Babylonian Captivity, and is mentioned both by Ezra and Nehemiah.[2] In each case it is associated with Geba as its nearest neighbor.

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[1] Ant. B. V. ch. i. 22.

[2] Josh. xviii. 25; Judges iv. 4, 5.

Such sites, I suppose, will be perpetuated from age to age, because there are in or about them fountains of good water.

The ruins at er Râm are now so prostrate and featureless that my artist declared there was nothing to photograph, and declined to make the attempt. The top of the ridge above er Râm commands an extensive prospect in all directions, including many hamlets and deserted sites: 'Anâta, Tuleil el Fûl, and Beit Hanîna to the south; and northward are Mŭkhmâs, Rŭmmôn, and et Taiyibeh in the distance; while 'Atâra, the Ataroth-addar of Joshua xvi. 5, and Burka, Deir Dîwân, Ram Allah, and various other villages are clustered around el Bîreh. A ride of another hour will bring us to the tents on the greensward above the copious fountain of el Bîreh.

I am glad our long day's ride is so nearly ended—

> The weary sun hath made a golden set,
> And by the bright track of his fiery car
> Gives token of a goodly day to-morrow.

As we approach the village, I see that our thoughtful cook has hung his lantern out to guide us to the tents.

May 6th. Evening.

We have now turned quite away from the Holy City, and lost sight of its sacred and suggestive surroundings. I will never regret the opportunity I have had to go in and out of her gates, and to walk about Zion until the entire panorama has been indelibly fixed in my memory. To the intelligent and devout Christian it is in many respects the most interesting spot in the world.

Not to go far back in sacred history, one needs only remember that somewhere within Jerusalem was organized the first Christian Church, more than eighteen hundred years ago, by twelve "unlearned and ignorant men;" and that during all those eventful centuries this Church has lived on through the crash of falling empires, and the bewildering maze of countless convulsions and revolutions, social, civil, and political; that she has all the while grown, and spread, and conquered, until at this hour her territorial domains include all Europe, a large part of Asia, the two continents of America, vast regions of Australasia, and no small portion of Africa.

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[1] 1 Kings xv. 16–22.

[2] Ezra ii. 26; Neh. vii. 30.

And still her march is onward.

Yes, and she has now quite surrounded the outlying territories of heathen darkness; and from a thousand points, with agents and agencies innumerable, she is addressing herself with fresh courage for the final and complete conquest of the world. The victory is sure, the triumph certain, for this is that "stone" which Nebuchadnezzar saw "cut out without hands," which broke in pieces "the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold" of that "great image" which he beheld in his dream, and it "became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth."[1] From Mount Zion this symbolic stone was cut, and from there began its resistless and all-conquering revolutions.

With Jerusalem as a centre, the observer has around him the terrestrial witnesses, God-created and incorruptible, to all the cardinal facts upon which our faith reposes; and in the midst of such scenes the Apostles' Creed, that well-known symbol of Christian doctrine, is clothed with unwonted significance. "I believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. The third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead." It was the firm belief in the literal truth comprised in the articles of our venerable creed that imparted to the first heralds of the Gospel their superhuman energy and courage. It was because they believed in Jesus that they went forth to teach, to preach, to suffer, and to die. And it is the assured belief in substantially these same "articles" that now animates the heart, and sustains the hope of the Church. Surely, then, a pilgrimage to Jerusalem needs no justification, nor does it require the aid of superstition and fictitious "inventions" to render a visit eminently instructive and edifying.

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[1] Dan. ii. 34, 35.

In spite of all that is painful and offensive, I bid farewell to the Holy City with regret and reverence. On an occasion like the present, one can well adopt the words of the Psalmist: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: peace be within thy walls."[1]

As one walks about the Holy City, the imagination is often busy with speculations regarding her ultimate destiny. Nothing can rob her of her past; but he must be a bold man who would venture to forecast her future. Is Jerusalem to remain henceforth and always the same unimportant city as at present?

Who can tell! Looking at the world as now constituted and governed, it is difficult to imagine any possible combination of causes adequate to make Jerusalem a great capital of an independent state. The whole current of events, the entire drift of the age, the grand developments of society, the growth of kingdoms, the progress of civilization, the multiplication and perfection of the means of travel and traffic, in a word, the manifest and irresistible outworkings of divine providence, all lead to the same conclusion: that this country can never again become a great and controlling centre. Jerusalem herself has no natural advantages or resources to build up and sustain a large modern city. Therefore I conclude, speaking "after the manner of men," that until "a new heaven and a new earth" are revealed, the Holy City will remain substantially what she is at the present day. And the desire of my heart is that so it should be. I would not have the existing monuments of her past history obliterated by the works and ways of a modern city.

Many enlightened Christians will sympathize with these feelings. They would regard as profanation the smoke and bustle of manufactories, and the rush and roar of the locomotive with its bell and whistle. Still, improvements in many directions are quite compatible with the conservation of her sacred monuments, and many such have actually been undertaken and successfully carried out. The Jerusalem of to-day is very different from what she was in 1833, when I made my first visit. Dilapidated churches have been restored, and new ones erected; hospitals, schools, synagogues, convents, and hotels have arisen in various parts of the city, and many comfortable dwellings have been built, both within and without the walls. Such improvements will, no doubt, be multiplied until the environs shall wear a cheerful and prosperous appearance. But her true glory lies not in these things. Jerusalem should ever be the "Holy City." In this she can have no rival, and ever as the bounds of Christendom enlarge will her name and her fame extend, until she becomes the common religious centre of the world. We may never again visit these sacred shrines, but in future ages unnumbered pilgrims will come hither, even "from the ends of the earth," to worship where our blessed Lord and Redeemer "suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried;" and from whence "he rose from the dead" and "ascended into heaven."

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[1] Psa. cxxii. 6, 7.

III.

EL BÎREH TO NÂBLUS.

Church and Khân at el Bîreh.—El Bîreh, Beeroth.—Biblical References to Beeroth.—Jotham's Parable.—The Murder of Ish-bosheth.—Illustrations of Manners and Customs, Ancient and Modern.—Character and Conduct of David.—Incident in the Life of Jesus.—Modern Village of el Bîreh.—The latter Rains.—Storm at el Bîreh.—Sennacherib's March towards Jerusalem.—The Wilderness eastward to the Jordan.—Mŭkhmâs, Michmash.—Invasion of the Philistines.—Oppression of the Children of Israel.—Disarmament of the People.—The Rocks Bozez and Seneh.—Exploit of Jonathan and his Armor-bearer.—Migron.—The Pomegranate-tree in Migron.—The Earthquake, the "trembling of God."—Defeat and Flight of the Philistines.—Beitîn, Beth-el.—Reservoir at Beitîn.—Ruins of a Tower and Church.—Burj Beitîn, Makhrûn.—The Malta Cross.—"The House of God and the Gate of Heaven."—Jacob's Dream at Bethel.—Luz.—Bethel an Ancient Religious Shrine.—Abraham and Jacob at Bethel.—Jeroboam and the Golden Calves.—Beth-aven, House of Vanity.—Abraham and Lot.—Khŭrbet Mŭkhatâr, Ruins of a Greek Church.—The Site of Ai.—Sheibân el Aye.—The Ambush sent by Joshua.—Wady es Suweinît.—Et Tell the probable Site of Ai.—The Man of Luz.—Luzah on Mount Gerizim.—Bethel after the Days of the Patriarchs.—Elisha and the Children of Bethel.—"Nearer, my God, to thee."—Extensive Outlook from the Hills of Ephraim.—The Lot of Ephraim.—Destruction of Forests, Ancient and Modern.—Râm Allah.—Jufna, Gophna.—'Ain Yebrûd.—Primitive Travelling in the Holy Land.—The Barren Fig-tree.—Culture of the Fig and the Olive.—'Ain el Harâmîyeh.—Wady el Belât.—Sinjil.—Jiljîlia, Gilgal.—Elijah and Elisha.—Turmus 'Âya, Site of the Tabernacle.—Seilûn, Shiloh.—Jami'a ed Dâim.—Balûtat Ibrahîm.—Jami'a el Arb'ain.—Ruins at Seilûn.—Major Wilson's Description of the Site of the Tabernacle.—Gathering of the Tribes.—"The Daughters of Shiloh," and the Sabine Women.—The Story of Hannah and Samuel.—Leah's Mandrakes.—Khân el Lubbân, Lebonah.—Rŭmmon, the Rock Rimmon.—Deir Duwân.—Et Taiyibeh, Ophrah.—Ephraim of the New Testament.—Khân es Sawaieh.—Picturesque Mountain Terraces.—Plain of el Mŭkhna.—"Fields White to Harvest."

May 7th.

TO judge from the size of the dilapidated church and the ruined khân above, and north of the fountain, el Bîreh must have been a place of importance even in early Christian times.

During the Crusading kingdom in Jerusalem it was possessed by the Knights Templars, and they probably erected both the church and the khân; and there may also have been a hospice connected with them. The north wall of the church is in tolerable preservation, showing the remains of a double apse and the choir, all encumbered, however, with the ruins of the original edifice. The large stones seen in the walls of some of the native houses evidently belonged to a more ancient place, as also the great blocks about the fountain.

On the ridge north-east of the present village are extensive quarries, rock-cut tombs, and old cisterns, all manifest indications of antiquity; nor is there any reason to doubt that el Bîreh occupies the site of the Biblical Beeroth, the most northern of the four Gibeonite towns that made a league with Joshua.[1] The ancient and modern name, signifying wells or cisterns, is in itself a sufficiently decisive identification. "Beeroth also was reckoned to Benjamin," as we read in 2 Samuel iv. 2, 3; but "the Beerothites fled to Gittaim," wherever that may have been. After Jeroboam had established the rival kingdom of Israel, making "Beth-el the king's chapel, and the house of the kingdom," as Amos calls it, Beeroth naturally became the frontier town of Judah in this direction, and must have been strongly fortified.

It was probably to this el Bîreh that Jotham fled for fear of his brother Abimelech and the men of Shechem, after delivering to them his sarcastic address from the top of Gerizim. That striking parable is one of the only two genuine fables found in the Bible. It was also terribly prophetic, for the imprecations, loud and deep, of the injured Jotham were followed by swift retribution upon his enemies. "Let fire come out from Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem, and the house of Millo; and let fire come out from the men of Shechem, and from the house of Millo, and devour Abimelech," and so it came to pass, for "God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech," and they mutually destroyed each other.[2]

The Biblical references to Beeroth are not always to her honor.

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[1] Josh. ix. 16, 21.

[2] Judges ix. 7–23.

It was the birthplace of those assassins, Rechab and Baanah, who murdered Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul, in his own bedchamber. The record of that foul deed in the fourth chapter of 2 Samuel abounds in striking illustrations not only of the character of Ish-bosheth and that of David, but also regarding the manners and customs of that distant age and unscrupulous generation.

For example, the assassins gained admission "into the midst of the house, as though they would have fetched wheat;" nor is there anything strange in thus bringing wheat from the threshing-floor into the house, even of a modern prince, or taking it away from thence to the mill. The murderers, also, entered the house "about the heat of the day," and "Ish-bosheth lay on a bed at noon," indicating slothfulness and utter want of watchfulness on the part of the king's household, and amongst his guards a state of affairs so common to this day as to require no explanation. Had it not been so, the two men could not have achieved their bloody deed in open day, and made their escape in safety, carrying with them the head of the slaughtered king. Such a tragedy, however, would not have been enacted in the house of David, for neither he nor his servants could thus be caught sleeping in the middle of the day.

The behavior of David on that occasion was eminently characteristic and noble. When those miscreants presented the head of their victim to David, expecting a large reward, he sternly repulsed them, saying, "As the Lord liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity, when one told me, saying, Behold, Saul is dead, thinking to have brought good tidings, I took hold of him, and slew him in Ziklag. How much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his bed? shall I not therefore now require his blood of your hand, and take you away from the earth? And David commanded his young men, and they slew them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged them up over the pool in Hebron."[1]

From Ezra and Nehemiah it appears that Beeroth was reoccupied by Jews who returned with Zerubbabel from the Babylonian captivity; but it never rose to any eminence, nor was it distinguished by any remarkable event in the Jewish annals. It is not mentioned in the New Testament, but tradition has connected it with the only recorded incident in the youthful history of our Lord. The pilgrim caravan with whom Joseph and Mary were returning home from Jerusalem spent the first night, it is said, at Bîreh, and not until they had arrived here did his parents discover that Jesus was not "in the company." Immediately "they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. And after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions." In utter astonishment, "his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing."[1] It is part of the tradition that the ruined church was erected here by the Knights Templars to commemorate that event in the life of Jesus; and since el Bîreh is now, and has always been, I suppose, the limit of the first day's journey of pilgrim caravans northward from Jerusalem, there is nothing improbable in the main facts set forth.

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[1] 2 Sam. iv. 9–12.

El Bîreh is correctly located by Eusebius in the Onomasticon, and Maundrell was the first of modern travellers who called attention to the similarity of its ancient and modern name. The present village is poor; the houses are low and built partly underground, and it has a population of but seven or eight hundred Moslems, not at all disposed to be communicative or respectful.

As an illustration of the irregular and uncertain occurrence of "the latter rains," I will relate my experience at el Bîreh. I arrived here from Bethel, one evening in May, about four years ago, and found my tent pitched on this identical green terrace where we are now encamped. Rain had already commenced to fall, and it increased in violence so that tumultuous torrents soon came rushing down the hill-side, flooding the tent. I had rarely seen such a storm even in midwinter. Vivid lightning flashed incessantly, followed by the crash of terrific thunder, while the rain, mingled with hail, beat in pitiless fury against our frail tabernacle. At times the wild wind threatened to catch up and fly away with us and all our belongings over the rugged mountains.

The muleteers had found shelter for themselves and their animals in the village, and we were left alone to battle with the tem-

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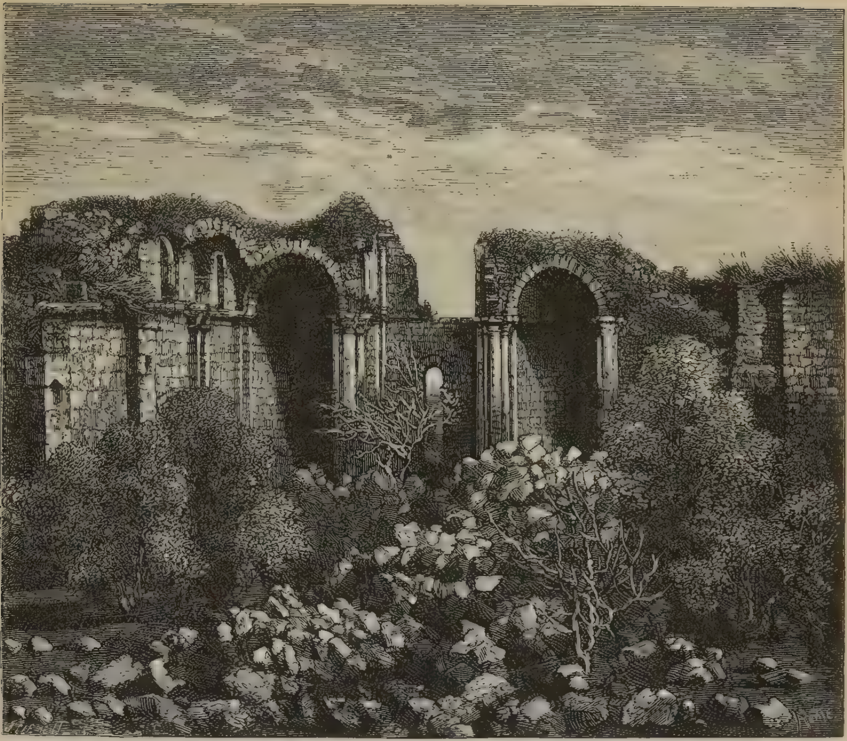
[1] Luke ii. 41–49.



RUINED CHURCH AT EL BÎREH—BEEROTH.

pest, which actually continued all night. When the wished-for daylight struggled through the murky atmosphere, "cold and colorless and gray," the whole surrounding region seemed ingulfed in a muddy sea. It had also become extremely cold; none of the Bîrehites ventured forth from their dripping hovels, nor did the shepherds lead their flocks abroad to pasture. No former experience of mine in this part of Palestine had prepared me for such a storm. Copious showers are common enough throughout April, and I was once in early May detained for a whole day in the valley of Nâblus, but the air was then warm and balmy, and the country rejoiced in the long delayed latter rain.

If the ordinary highway from the north to Jerusalem passed through Bîreh, why did Sennacherib in his famous invasion select the route by Michmash, Geba, Ramah, Gibeah, and other places along a line farther east, and through a region said to be far more broken and difficult?

I can only suggest that Bethel and Beeroth and other towns on this road may then have been strongly fortified, and the invader wished to avoid the delay which it would have required to capture them. Certainly the net-work of wadys between Michmash and Jerusalem interposed obstacles which would not have been encountered without some controlling necessity.

While our company is getting ready to march, we will ride out to a position east of el Bîreh, which commands a grand prospect over all that region, including the barren wilderness eastward to the Jordan. None of the villages in that direction are large or important. Michmash is now called Mŭkhmâs—a wretched hamlet situated at the end of a long and rough ascent up an uncultivated wady. A few heavy foundations amongst the dilapidated hovels of the present inhabitants, and the usual rock-cut tombs and cisterns, are now the only indications of its ancient importance. The country around it also wears a forlorn and desolate appearance. And yet Michmash, with its near surroundings, participated in some of the most stirring scenes in the early warfare of the children of Israel. Not long after Saul was made king, the Philistines invaded this part of Palestine with an immense army, and made Michmash their head-quarters, from whence they sent out plundering expeditions in various directions, as we read in the thirteenth chapter of 1 Samuel.

In the account of that invasion various remarkable circumstances are mentioned which seem to call for explanation. For instance, are we to understand that the oppression of Israel by the Philistines had been so extremely stringent that there were only two swords in the entire Hebrew army?

The fact is stated in the most unqualified terms, and it implies a severity in the treatment of the people well-nigh incredible. I have seen the attempt made more than once by the Egyptian, and afterwards by the Turkish Government, to disarm the sparse population of this and other regions of the country; and yet, with all the energy of Ibrahim Pasha, and notwithstanding the utmost cruelty in punishing those who concealed arms, there were always found amongst the people, when fresh troubles arose, not swords only and daggers, but a surprising number of guns and pistols. We must conclude, therefore, that the search for weapons by the Philistines had been far more effectual, and of course more oppressive and cruel. Every house must have been thoroughly ransacked, and not only men but women, and even children, tortured to make them divulge the hiding-places of all their weapons. The brutal abuse to which such a disarmament subjects the people is inconceivable to those who have not actually witnessed it. These Biblical notices illustrate and confirm the statement that there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul.

Those two sharp rocks, Bozez and Seneh, "between the passages by which Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison," have they been identified? They must have been somewhere between the present Mŭkhmâs and modern Jeb'a, for we read that "the forefront of the one was situate northward over against Michmash, and the other southward over against Gibeah."[1]

It was evidently the intention of the writer detailing that daring exploit of Jonathan and his armor-bearer to mark the position of those crags so distinctly that ever after they could be identified with ease and certainty, but the features of the locality may have so changed during the three thousand intervening years as to entirely defeat that purpose. Lieutenant Conder rejects the locality selected by Dr. Robinson, and others will hesitate to accept the one suggested by Mr. Conder; and we may never get beyond conjecture and uncertainty in regard to that matter. A visit, however, to Wady es Suweinît, "the passage of Michmash," and the high cliffs in that wild neighborhood, will sufficiently explain why "Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armour bearer after him," when they fell upon the Philistines, and slew them—there is no other way!

Where is Migron, in which Saul was encamped with his six hundred men on that eventful day?[2]

Migron may have been a suburb of Gibeah. Almost every considerable village even now has one or more of such dependent hamlets, called Mezra'ah in the singular. As to the pomegranate-tree

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[1] 1 Sam. xiv. 4, 5.

[2] 1 Sam. xiv. 2.

WADY ES SUWEINÎT, NEAR MŬKHMÂS—SCENE OF JONATHAN'S EXPLOIT.

under which "Saul tarried," we must here, as in many similar cases, emphasize the article. It was not *a* pomegranate, but, according to the Hebrew, *the* pomegranate-tree in Migron, implying that it was a large and well-known specimen. They are generally mere bushes or clusters of them, scarcely high enough for a man to stand under. I have seen some, however, near Hebron and on Lebanon which had grown up to be respectable trees; and as they are hardy and long-lived, this particular one in Migron had probably become memorable, either for its size or from some celebrated event which occurred at or near it.

There appears to have been a fearful earthquake on that great day of battle: "There was trembling in the host, in the field, and among all the people, and the earth quaked: so it was a very great trembling."[1]

Yes, and in this "trembling of God," this earthquake, I find the explanation not only of the glorious victory over the Philistines, but of other phenomena mentioned in the narrative. Any one who has witnessed the terror and dismay which even a slight shock occasions in this country of tottering stone-houses can readily understand how a mighty "trembling of God" should have caused a ruinous panic in the army of the Philistines. No doubt they trod down and destroyed one another, for "every man's sword was against his fellow, and there was a very great discomfiture."[2] And the Hebrews would quickly exchange their clubs and ox-goads for the swords and spears of their enemies.

The entire account of the surprise, the battle, and the pursuit brings before the mind scenes of confusion, disaster, and destruction such as rarely occur in the history of human warfare.

Our ride of about an hour from el Bîreh has brought us to Beitîn, the Biblical Beth-el, and we may hand over our horses to some of these half-naked urchins who are clamoring for bakhshîsh, while we examine the ruins of this once celebrated place. Leave nothing on your saddle that can be stolen, for you need not expect to find anything thus left when we return.

It is hopeless to search amongst this confused mass of prostrate walls and ruins for any memorials of ancient Bethel. It could never have been a large city, even when Jeroboam's golden calves rendered it famous, or rather infamous. The location between two shallow wadys—one on the east running up north, and the other on the south stretching westward—would control both the shape and size of the place, for Bethel seems never to have spread beyond these natural limits.

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[1] 1 Sam. xiv. 15.

[2] 1 Sam. xiv. 20.

The triangular platform upon which the city was built declines southward, and in the valley below it is an immense reservoir, the only thing about Bethel that, in its present form, seems to be ancient. It is about three hundred and fourteen feet long, and two hundred and seventeen wide. The walls, except on the eastern end, are mostly gone, but some parts along the north side show that the work was originally built with large and well-squared stones. This reservoir appears to have been supplied with water, in part at least, from fountains; but the bottom is now filled up with earth, and the walls so broken that the water runs away, leaving a smooth grass-plot, where the shepherds of Abraham and Jacob may have watered their flocks; and the maidens of Sarah and Rachel, even old Deborah herself, filled their pitchers, just as the Arab girls of the village do to this day, and where one would like to encamp, were it not always damp.

It is quite disappointing to find so few traces of the old city. Of course the stones with which the native hovels are built may be of any age, but, I suppose, neither the ruined tower on the north-west of the village, nor the Greek church on the south-east, have any claims to antiquity.

Quite true; and therefore we will resume our saddles and ride across the valley eastward to that square building on the hill which is the most prominent object in this region. The natives call it simply el Burj, the tower, or Burj Beitîn, but its real name doubtless was Makhrûn. By whom it was erected is not known, nor when; but the materials, as you see, must have belonged to an older edifice. Some of the stones are quite large, and the burj encloses a small Greek church. There are also ancient tombs and a few small columns scattered about the fields. On a former visit I noticed the Malta cross on a large block, and some curious combinations of other crosses and geometrical figures. This burj may have been erected on the traditional site of "the house of God, and the gate of heaven," where Jacob slept, and saw his remarkable vision. The Biblical narrative does not give the impression that Jacob slept in the village, but "he lighted on a certain place," which must have been near Bethel, "and tarried there all night."[1]

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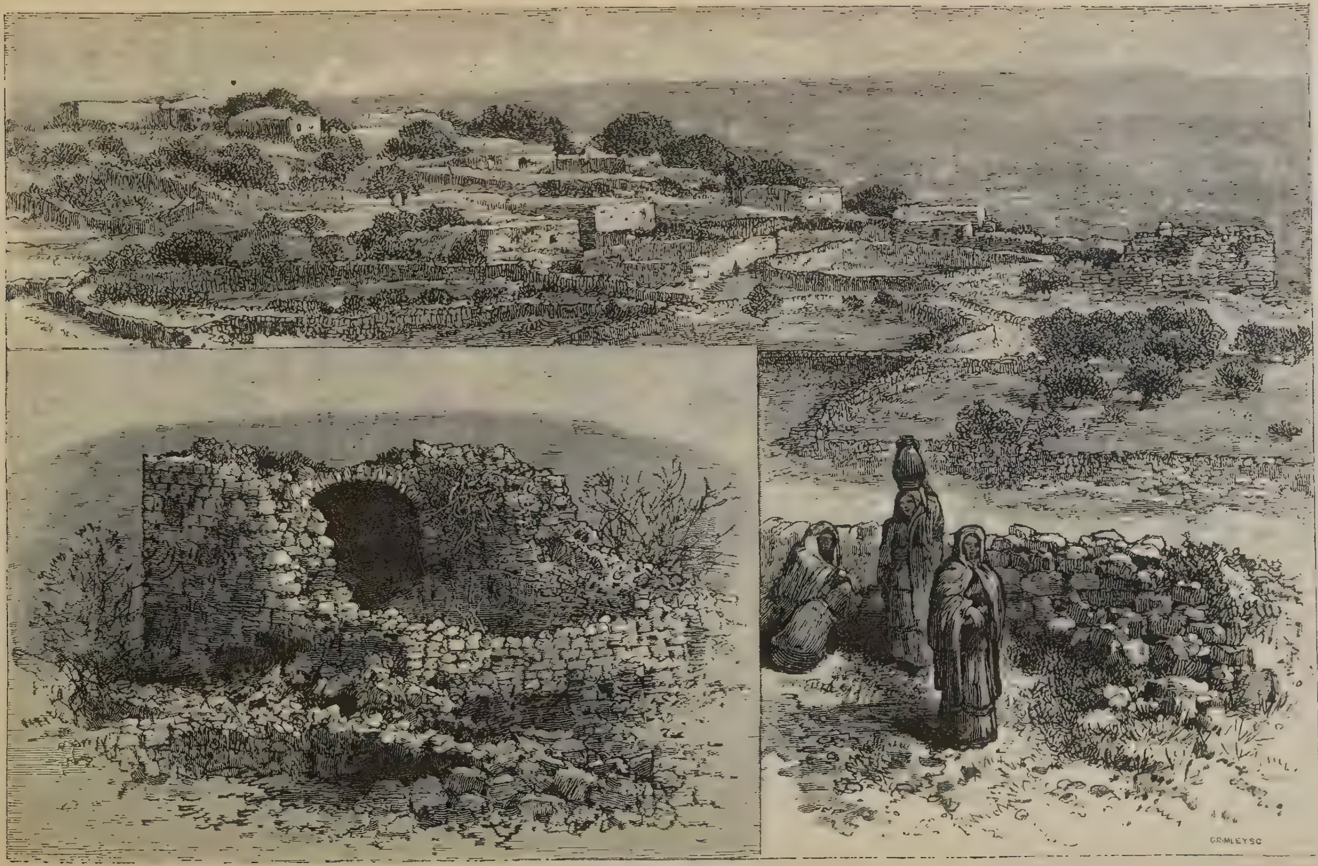
[1] Gen. xxviii. 11.



BEITÎN - BETHEL.

We have seen no place in this country whose present condition is in such painful contrast to its past history as poor fallen Bethel. The original name of the city was Luz, as we learn from Genesis xxviii. 19, and elsewhere; and it was Jacob himself who first called it Beth-el, "the house of God," with reference to his marvellous dream. It doubtless marks the site of one of the most ancient religious sanctuaries in the world. I think it quite probable that even Abraham was led to fix his encampment in this neighborhood because it was already distinguished for its sacred shrine. Nor was it by accident that Jacob "lighted" on Bethel in his sad flight to Padan-aram. In the hour of sore perplexity, he may have sought this place in order to worship where his grandfather Abraham erected an altar to Jehovah; and probably much more passed between him and the God of his fathers on that occasion than is found in the record. May we not believe that in deep repentance he mourned over the cruel deception practised upon his old and blind father, and earnestly sought and obtained forgiveness? Some such antecedent preparation of heart on his part seems almost necessary to render the supernatural vision that was vouchsafed him appropriate. That there is no mention of this "personal experience" need not surprise us, for Bible narratives rarely allude to such matters except in general terms.

Jeroboam, no doubt, placed one of his golden calves in Bethel because of its venerable religious traditions and associations.[1] But Hosea, in detestation of this idolatrous worship, gave it a third name, Beth-aven, "house of vanity."[2] It is probable, however, that this was the name of a site near Bethel, for Joshua sent his spies "from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Beth-aven, on the east side of Beth-el."[3] And so also we read that the great battle with the Philistines in the time of Saul "passed over from Michmash unto Beth-aven."[4] All these notices imply that there was an ancient place bearing this name near and east of Bethel, and "the house of high places" for the golden calf may have been there; and thus Hosea did not, in reality, invent a new name for Bethel itself, but simply, by a play on the word, fastened an opprobrious meaning upon that site of idolatrous worship.[5]

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[1] 1 Kings xii. 25–33.

[2] Hosea iv. 15; v. 8; x. 5.

[3] Josh. vii. 2.

[4] 1 Sam. xiv. 23.

[5] 1 Kings xii. 31.

It is useless to trace the history of Bethel after the kingdom of the Ten Tribes was overthrown, and the people carried captive beyond the Euphrates. We hear of it occasionally in the days of the later prophets, and read of it in the books of the Apocrypha. Josephus also mentions it frequently, and so does Eusebius and Jerome; but in their time it had dwindled into an inconsiderable village, and such it has remained ever since.

Can you suggest any reason why Abraham, after the separation from Lot, should have fixed upon this dry and barren neighborhood for his residence?

As already intimated, it may have been from religious motives, and, if so, the choice made by Lot of the wicked cities of the plain was the more objectionable, since it separated himself and his family from the worship of Jehovah. But the selection of this region by the Father of the Faithful was perhaps appropriate on other grounds. The table-land on the east is extensive, and may have then afforded excellent pasturage for his flocks and herds. The country at that time being but sparsely inhabited, allowed him a free range over a wide extent of territory, and this was an essential condition wherever he might fix his residence. As the population increased, he was obliged to move farther and farther southward, until he and his descendants were crowded out into the great Wilderness of Wandering south of Hebron, to Beersheba, to Rehoboth, and even to Beer-lahai-roi.

Let us seek shelter from the burning sun in the shadow of this burj while I give you an account of one of my former visits. We were a large party, and rode over to the burj escorted by the sheikh of Beitîn. He also took us to see a ruined church about half a mile south-east of this burj, called Khŭrbet Mŭkhatâr, ruins of Mŭkhatâr, which I understood him to say was also the name of a deserted site a short distance to the east of the church. The walls of that edifice are all prostrate, but the foundations are perfect, including the apse on the east end. The nave was twenty-two paces long from the altar to the vestibule, and between that and the entrance at the west end of the church the distance was eighteen paces. There are eight or ten prostrate columns without capitals, and some very large stones about the screen or wall of the vestibule. Who erected that curious church, who worshipped in it, and when, are questions which remain to be answered; but I think the edifice is Greek, and anterior to the Crusades. From that place there is a wide and very striking prospect over the valley of the Jordan, the Dead Sea, and the regions beyond both. Some people at Taiyibeh told Dr. Robinson that this ruined church marked the site of Ai; but he justly observes that "there is not the slightest ground for any such hypothesis."

Of course when at Bethel one always feels prompted to search for Ai in this neighborhood; and as the sheikh was more than willing to enlighten us with his local knowledge, I made another effort to find it. I questioned him to the end of his patience, pronouncing the word Ai in every way I could think of, but without the desired result. At length I said, "What do you call this shallow valley which comes down from your village?" "It has no other name here but Wady Beitîn," said he; "but farther down it is called Wady el Aye." "Wady el Aye!" I exclaimed. "Yes; below yonder side wady which joins it from the west, and for a full hour's distance to the south-east, it is called Wady el Aye." "But is there no ruin in it which bears the same name?" "Oh yes; on the top of that high headland, that Râs south-east of us, is a very sacred Muzâr, called Sheibân el Aye, and there are very old ruins about it." The sheikh pronounced the word Aye with a very emphatic *a*, or rather *ay*, like in day.

We hastened back; and getting down terraced walls in Wady Beitîn as best we could, or, rather, our horses could, soon reached the base of the steep hill, or Râs, on whose summit was the Muzâr of Sheibân el Aye. The ascent of some two hundred feet is so precipitous that we should not have got our horses to the top had not the sheikh guided us to the most practicable parts. I was gratified to find not only the Muzâr, but also unmistakable evidences of great antiquity. The site in some respects answers well to the Biblical narrative of the capture of Ai by Joshua. A deep valley called Wady 'Abbâs, also Wady Jerâr, comes down from the north-west, and unites with Wady el Aye; while another on the south of the promontory makes the position naturally very strong, and one which could easily be fortified, having Wady 'Abbâs or Jerâr on the north, the main wady on the east, and Wady el Bîreh on the south—all deep and difficult ravines. The only part open to attack would be from the west. In either of those valleys "the ambush" sent by Joshua might have been hidden both from the people of Ai and from those of Bethel, though near to both. The site itself is now partially covered with old oak, terebinth, kharnûb, and z'arûr trees; and the only building of any importance is the Muzâr, sacred to Sheibân el Aye—the Old Man of Aye.

All this might pass very well; but the geographical points do not correspond to the description in Joshua viii. 12, 13, for there is no valley west of the Muzâr where "the liers in wait" could be concealed. Wady 'Abbâs, it is true, runs up north-west, and if "all the host," mentioned in verse thirteenth, formed part of the ambush, and were hidden in that wady, their position would be exactly north of Sheibân el Aye, and directly between Bethel and it, as the matter is stated in the twelfth verse. Joshua himself, with the main army, remained in "the midst of the valley," and there is abundant room in the great wady south-east of Sheibân el Aye, and which lower down is called Wady es Suweinît. It is certainly interesting to find such a name attached to a strong and evidently very ancient locality, and giving name also for several miles to the wady that descends south-east towards Jericho. It is also worthy of remark that the topography of the Bible is not always exact as to the points of the compass, and that in this particular case the indications are not clear nor very distinct.

I have long watched the search for Ai with special interest, and now regret not having visited this new candidate for the honor.

It would have taken more time than we have to spare, and besides, I have not sufficient confidence in the identification myself. I have lately been disposed to accept a place called simply et Tell as the probable site of Ai. It is situated in the open wilderness, a few miles to the south-east of Beitîn, and has been visited and carefully described by Major Wilson, Lieutenant Conder, and others, and in their hands I am willing to leave the question. The name et Tell may have been retained ever since Joshua made of Ai "a heap forever." The rubbish and ruins on and about that site are no doubt old, but that they belong to the houses that Joshua burnt more than three thousand years ago, is wholly incredible. The ravines which descend from et Tell southward into Wady Suweinît would afford adequate space for "the liers in wait," and the other topographical points may all be made to correspond with the Biblical narrative in the eighth chapter of Joshua. It is high time to resume the saddle and follow our caravan, which has already passed on beyond Beitîn, and is now far ahead of us.

Is it known where that man of Luz, who betrayed his native place to "the house of Joseph," built his new city?

There is a ruin on Mount Gerizim, near the platform of the Samaritan temple, called Luzah, which some identify with the Luza mentioned by Jerome in the Onomasticon as the site of Luz. But this is, doubtless, too near Bethel. The man would scarcely venture to settle so near the scene of his treachery; and it is expressly stated that he "went into the land of the Hittites, and built a city, and called the name thereof Luz: which is the name thereof unto this day."[1] Now Gerizim could not be properly called the land of the Hittites, for we know that these people resided in Cœlesyria, and at a very early day became celebrated and powerful. Cœlesyria included the Bŭkâ'a, and at the south end of that great plain there is a village called Kâmid el Lauz, which occupies the site of an ancient town. I am therefore inclined to place the successor of old Luz in the south-eastern corner of the Bŭkâ'a, and not on Gerizim.

There is nothing in the history of Bethel after the days of the Patriarchs that reflects honor upon the place or its inhabitants, whether heathen or Hebrew. It was destroyed by treachery, and in the hands of the children of Joseph it became, instead of "the house of God," Beth-aven, "the house of vanity;" and thither the besotted Israelites went to kiss the golden calves. Jeroboam "made of the lowest of the people priests" for his idol temple, "and this thing became a sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth."[2] The people also became corrupt and infamous, as was to be expected. At the time of Elisha, the very children were impious mockers, and followed the prophet crying, "Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head," probably in derision of the reported ascent of Elijah to heaven;

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[1] Judges i. 22–26.

[2] 1 Kings xiii. 33, 34.

"and there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them."[1] Thus the story goes on from bad to worse; and, to make a long march downward to our day, the present inhabitants are the most rude and boorish.

Where was that wood out of which issued the she bears? Every trace of it seems to have vanished.

It appears that much of the lot of the "children of Joseph" was a forest, for Joshua says to them, "It is a wood, and thou shalt cut it down." And this they did so effectually as to leave no trace of it. A few valleys, however, between Bethel and the Jordan are still well wooded, and probably the she bears came up from some of those wild gorges, as did also that lion which slew the prophet who was sent to cry against the altar in Bethel, and being deceived by "an old prophet," he transgressed the commandment of the Lord not to eat and drink in the place, and was slain for his disobedience, as you may read in the thirteenth chapter of 1 Kings. That is one of the most extraordinary narratives in the Bible; yet it may be noticed that it is not the only recorded instance of the presence of living lions in this part of Palestine.

Mrs. Adams, in her simple yet exquisite hymn, has made a very happy use of Jacob's visit and vision in Bethel—

Though like a wanderer,
  The sun gone down,
Darkness be over me,
  My rest a stone;
Yet in my dreams I'd be
Nearer, my God, to thee—
  Nearer to thee!

Then, with my waking thoughts
  Bright with thy praise,
Out of my stony griefs
  Bethel I'll raise;
So by my woes to be
Nearer, my God, to thee—
  Nearer to thee!

Sung here amongst the echoing hills of Ephraim, this hymn seems natural and appropriate; but it is well that Mrs. Adams did not visit Bethel; for if she had spent a single night amid the discomforts of modern Beth-aven, we might never have had her sweet hymn.

We are now passing along the very backbone of Palestine. Ascend any of these rounded hill-tops on the left, and the flowery plain of Sharon lies beneath, while the glorious Mediterranean spreads away westward to the horizon. On the right, you look down into the deep valley of the Jordan and the deeper basin of the Dead Sea; and beyond and upward, to the mountains of Bashan, Gilead, and Moab fading into the eastern sky. We cannot turn aside to visit the Biblical sites on either hand, but must keep steadily on the great highway if we are to reach Nâblus to-night. This entire region belonged to Ephraim, and its present appearance, minus the forests, agrees well with the statement in Joshua that it was a hill-country, rough and wild, "the land of the Perizzites and of the giants."[1]

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[1] 2 Kings ii. 23, 24.

Perhaps no part of Palestine has undergone a greater change for the worse than this lot of Ephraim. It is clearly implied in the interview between Joshua and the discontented "children of Joseph" that these mountains were then clothed with dense forests. The Ephraimites claimed to be "a great people," and therefore ought to have a larger inheritance than the "one lot and one portion" given to them. To this Joshua rather ironically replies, "If thou be a great people, then get thee up to the wood country, and cut down for thyself there in the land of the Perizzites and of the giants."[2]

Nothing can be more ruinous to a mountain country than to cut down its forests without replanting it with olive, fig, or other fruit trees, terracing it with vineyards, keeping them in repair, and thus preventing the earth from being washed away. I have seen large sections of Hermon denuded of its glorious woods by the charcoal burners from Damascus, and the winter rains soon carried down into the wadys all the soil, leaving the rocks exposed to the burning sun, bare and barren. Thus the colonies of Egyptian miners stripped the steep mountain-sides of Sinai even ages before Moses led the ransomed Israelites to the foot of Horeb, and those hard and blistered cliffs of granite and porphyry can never again be reclothed with verdure. Thus it has happened in the past centuries of misrule and neglect to almost every part of Palestine; thus it will continue to be throughout the Holy Land unless a wiser government than that of the Turk restrain this ruinous process. And this fully accounts for the present deplorable condition and aspect of

[1] Josh. xvii. 14–18.

[2] Josh. xvii. 14–18.

the country. "The top of Carmel shall wither;" "Bashan and the flower of Lebanon languisheth."[1]

Are there any considerable towns or deserted sites along our present route?

None of special importance; Râm Allah is a prosperous village some two miles west of el Bîreh, but it is comparatively modern. The inhabitants are over two hundred—all Christians. There are Greek and Latin religious establishments, and a small Protestant school in the place. It overlooks the whole country westward to the sea, including parts of the plain of Sharon, and the sands of Ramleh and Jaffa.

Jufna, the Gophna of Josephus, lies in a valley, about four miles north-west of Beitîn. It was a place of some note under the Romans at the beginning of our era, and was the capital of one of the ten toparchies into which Judea was then divided. Traces of the Roman road which passed through it from Jerusalem to Nâblus are still visible, and in some places the pavement is almost entire. There Titus encamped previous to the capture of the Holy City, and the destruction of the Temple. Like Râm Allah, the inhabitants, about two hundred, are Christian, and consequently industrious and thrifty. The surrounding hills are terraced for vineyards, and abound with the fig and the olive; while near the village are many apple, pear, pomegranate, and other fruit trees. The only remains of antiquity are the prostrate walls of a castle, and those of the ruined church dedicated to St. George.

What is the name of this village on our left?

'Ain Yebrûd, a pretty place; and there is more appearance of thrift about it than is seen in most villages along this route. I slept under one of those large olive-trees which you see just north of it, on my first journey through Palestine. In those primitive times I travelled without either tent, canteen, or cook; rode a mule without a bridle, and with no other saddle than the wide jelâl which you see on our baggage animals. And yet, with the roots of that tree for a pillow, and an umbrella over my head to shelter me from the dew, I slept more soundly than Jacob at Bethel—at least I had no extraordinary dreams to break my repose.

[1] Amos i. 2; Nah. i. 4.

Here are extensive fig-orchards, apparently recently planted, and very flourishing. I notice large figs on some trees which must be quite young. Is there any special significance in the three years' term of probation for the "barren fig-tree" mentioned in the parable of our Lord?[1]

At any rate, the limit agrees well with the nature of this tree. I have been assured by fig-growers that a tree that did not begin to bear the third year would be regarded as very unpromising. The proposal of the gardener to "dig about it and dung it" is also in accord with modern agricultural experience. Fig-trees require constant attention of this kind. On Lebanon those terraces which are most carefully cleared of stones, most frequently ploughed or dug over, and properly manured, are fig-orchards.

I have seen the statement somewhere that fig-trees do not bear every year, but that at least once in three years every "good tree" will yield a crop.

That is a mistake. The olive and many other fruit trees have in this country alternate years of rest and of bearing, but the fig-tree yields her fruit every year; and the reference in the parable cannot be to a condition which has no foundation in fact.

This has been a long descent, and not over-smooth, from 'Ain Yebrûd down to 'Ain el Harâmîyeh. I should think caravans would delight to encamp here under these singular cliffs, with their trickling driblets of water, and on this beautiful greensward, the like of which we have not seen for many a day.

Doubtless, if it were safe; but its name, 'Ain el Harâmîyeh, fountain of robbers, is a fair exponent of its character. The deep wady which here breaks through the lofty ridge on the west below the 'Ain drains this side of the mountains into the river 'Aujeh, as I was told, which enters the sea near Jaffa. Hereabouts it is called Wady el Belât, and some of its impracticable gorges are at times infested with those disagreeable gentry whose evil deeds have given the fountain its ill-omened name.

As the highway southward from Nâblus to Jerusalem followed the long, narrow, and waterless defile from Sinjil to this spot, it must have been a favorite camping-ground in times of peaceful security, and the foundations of this large birkeh, or cistern, show that provision was made to supply water for the caravans. Attached to it there may have been a khân for the protection and comfort of travellers. The place is now utterly deserted, and no native will consent to pass the night at 'Ain el Harâmîyeh. We may as well allow our horses to drink at these little troughs, and, if so inclined, you can gather maidenhair ferns from the rocks as a memento of our visit.

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[1] Luke xiii. 6–9.

For the next hour we must follow up the narrow ravine, and shall have for music the ringing echo, from the steep cliffs, of our iron-shod horses as they slip and slide along the rocky pavement. The ridges on either side will gradually become less precipitous, and olive and fig orchards may then be seen on well-made terraces. They mostly belong to Sinjil, which begins to appear yonder on the hill-side to our left. We have no occasion to pass through it, and you may be thankful that we need not spend the night in any of its wretched habitations. This I have done more than once, and do not wish to repeat the experience. On one occasion I rode from it over the bleak mountain westward for an hour to visit Jiljîlia, a forlorn and nearly deserted village, seated upon a high ridge, which commands a vast and varied prospect in all directions. I have the impression that it is the site of that Gilgal from which Elijah and Elisha passed down to Bethel on that memorable day when the great prophet was carried up to heaven in a chariot of fire, as recorded in the second chapter of 2 Kings. Bethel would be on the direct route to Jericho from Jiljîlia, and all the topographical indications in the narrative are met by this identification. It is nowhere stated that either of these prophets resided at a place called Gilgal; and they may have merely passed through it on their way down to Jericho.

We must now leave the regular road to Nâblus, and follow this path on our right, which will bring us in fifteen minutes to the site of ancient Shiloh.

What is the name of that village so prettily located on its low Tell, in the midst of the plain?

It is called Turmus 'Âya, an admirable site for the sacred Tabernacle when at Shiloh, having wide level plains all around it, where

SEILÛN—SHILOH.

JÂMI'A EL ARBA'ÎN—MOSK OF THE FORTY.

the tribes could pitch their numerous tents when they were assembled to celebrate the yearly festivals.

Is then that desolate hill just north of us the actual site of Shiloh, one of the earliest of the Hebrew sanctuaries?

The ruins, now called Seilûn, doubtless preserve to us the memory of that Shiloh where abode the Tabernacle of God from the time of Joshua to the days of Samuel; whither the tribes of Israel came up to worship for many eventful years in their history. Hither the child Samuel, when he was three years old, was brought by his mother, to be "lent to the Lord" all the days of his life, according to her vow, to be trained for the service of the sanctuary. Here poor, old, blind Eli fell backward and broke his neck when tidings came that the ark had been captured by the Philistines. The site in some places is overgrown and concealed by weeds, and in others clothed with wheat nearly ready for the sickle; but a careful examination will reveal abundant traces of an ancient city, built upon an oblong hill of no great relative elevation, but with deep valleys on the west, north, and east of it. There are only two buildings remaining upon this ancient site, and even these, though modern, and doubtless Christian churches, are more than half ruined. The one farthest north is called by the natives el Kŭsr, the castle, and also Jâmi'a ed Dâim, the mosk of the Eternal. It is thirty-nine feet by thirty-six, and twelve feet high. The walls are about four feet thick, and the interior is a low vaulted room, with two rude columns to support the arches of the roof. Near this Kŭsr is a large and noble oak-tree called Balûtat Ibrahîm, Abraham's oak. It is one of the "inhabited trees" so common in this country, and the superstitious peasants hang bits of rags on the branches to propitiate the mysterious beings that are supposed to "inhabit" it.

About fifty rods south of the Kŭsr is the other building, a curious ruin called Jâmi'a el Arba'în, mosk of the forty, with a legend not worth repeating. This singular edifice was strengthened on the north side, where the entrance was, by a solid exterior buttress ten feet thick at the ground, but sloping upwards to the top. The large stone over the door-way is ornamented with an amphora in the centre, having on either side handsome wreaths. This is the only attempt at architectural ornamentation about the edifice. This building, probably a church, is about thirty feet square, and the vaulted roof was supported by four columns, with Corinthian capitals. Three of these are still seen amongst the rubbish, and the capitals may have been brought from some neighboring ruin. Both the Kŭsr and this church or mosk had prayer niches on the south side, and were, therefore, used as places for Muhammedan worship.

The entire Tell of Seilûn is covered with shapeless ruins, over which one is strongly tempted to moralize, as did Jeremiah in his day. There are many deep cisterns all about the place, and a good fountain of sweet water in the valley on the east side of the Tell. Rock tombs abound in the cliffs, and the indications of an ancient and populous town are here found in abundance. But how indescribably forlorn and desolate! and, what better accords with its present appearance, you may regard every man seen prowling about as a robber. It is at times dangerous to visit the place, as I once found to my dismay. I was rescued, however, from a very unpleasant predicament by some peasants belonging to Sinjil.

Shiloh is no modern ruin. Even in the days of Jeremiah its total destruction had become a proverb: "Go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel."[1]

After quoting that passage from Jeremiah, Major Wilson adds: "Northwards the 'Tell' slopes down to a broad shoulder, across which a sort of level court, seventy-seven feet wide and four hundred and twelve feet long, has been cut. The rock is in places scarped to a height of five feet, and along the sides are several excavations, and a few small cisterns. The level portion of the rock is covered by a few inches of soil. It is not improbable that the place was thus prepared to receive the tabernacle, which, according to Rabbinical traditions, was 'a structure of low stone walls, with the tent drawn over the top.' At any rate, there is no other level space on the 'Tell' sufficiently large to receive a tent of the dimensions of the tabernacle."

Well, desolate as is this old site, it is satisfactory to find around it ample space for the annual gatherings of the tribes to keep the feasts ordained by the "Law of the Lord." On one of these occasions, as appears from the narrative, while the maidens, "the daughters of Shiloh," were dancing somewhere on those level plains, the two hundred wifeless Benjamites rushed out from amongst the vineyards, and carried them away to their homes on the rock Rimmon. This adventure always reminds me of the rape of the Sabine women by the Romans, at the command of Romulus. Possibly the Roman fable may have been made up out of this Hebrew fact.

Not very probable, though of course the date assigned to that exploit is many hundred years later than the story in Judges. There are some curious resemblances in the two cases, however—both occurred at religious festivals, both were enacted in order to supply wives to those who could not otherwise have obtained them. The result also in both instances, appears to have been fortunate; but the Sabine women eclipse "the daughters of Shiloh." By their own heroic intervention bloodshed was prevented, and two hostile people became united in one harmonious nation. We hear nothing about the Hebrew damsels; and it was not they, but the elders, who appeased their relatives or compelled them to hold their peace.

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[1] Jer. vii. 12–14.

We are, however, wandering from our appropriate domain, and, in coming back to it, I will merely avail of the occasion to commend the study of the three last chapters of Judges to those dyspeptic pessimists who are always croaking over the ever-growing corruption of modern times; and, for that matter, the abominable conduct of poor old Eli's depraved sons at the very doors of the tabernacle here in Shiloh will read the same lesson. No, no, the world has not grown worse in these last days, but infinitely better!

A most comfortable assurance to carry away from the sad ruins of Shiloh, certainly; and, in looking upon this desolation, we ought not to forget what the Lord declares that he himself had caused it to come to pass for the wickedness of his people, and as a warning to all who follow in their footsteps.

The only pleasant memory that lingers about Shiloh is the story of pious Hannah, and the history of her son's childhood, the great and good Samuel. But these matters, familiar to every reader of the Bible, old and young, need no illustration from us; and, besides, we have already lingered too long at this interesting spot, for night will overtake us miles away from our tent at Nâblus; so turn your horse down this wady on the west side of Jâmi'a ed Dâim, and keep him well in hand.

Very good advice, certainly, since there is no road whatever.

It is neither difficult nor dangerous to ride down these terraces. I have done the same thing before, and a short distance below we shall find a path which will bring us to Khân el Lubbân in about an hour.

What is this fruit, resembling yellow apples, scattered about the fields, and which seems to spring out of the ground itself?

Leah's mandrakes, tŭffâh el jan, apples of the jan, or evil spirits, whose properties we have sufficiently discussed before, and need not now repeat. I will only add, for the information of the curious in such matters, that I have found more of them in the fields about Shiloh than in all other places taken together that I have visited.

Nâblus, May 7th. Evening.

Our ride to-day was necessarily so hurried that there was no time to make inquiries about the country and villages along the latter part of the road.

I have several times travelled that route, and at different seasons of the year, and can easily give you a general sketch of it. You remember that soon after leaving Seilûn we entered Wady Lubbân, which we followed westward to the khân of the same name. The khân is now in ruins, and deserted, except when the flocks of the village gather there to be watered. Lubbân, khân or village, or both, marks the site of that Lebonah mentioned in Judges xxi. 19, in connection with the exploit of the Benjamites near Shiloh to obtain for themselves wives. "The rock Rimmon" to which the remnant of "the children of Benjamin" escaped after the slaughter, and all but extermination of the entire tribe at Gibeon, was directly east of Bethel. The modern village of Rŭmmon, situated on the top of a high hill, and visible from every direction, still bears the Biblical name. It is now only celebrated for the vast prospect which it commands over the surrounding country, far and wide.

Midway between it and Bethel is Deir Dîwân, a thriving Christian village; and north of it, on a hill, is et Taiyibeh, which Dr. Robinson identifies with the Ophrah of Benjamin, and this again with Ephraim, which Abijah, King of Judah, took from Jeroboam, along "with Bethel and Jeshanah, with the towns thereof."[1] Nor need we hesitate to identify that place with the Ephraim to which Jesus retired with his disciples from Jerusalem when he could "walk no more openly among the Jews."[2]

But to resume our ride from Khân Lubbân. You remember that the village is prettily located on a shelf of the western mountain. The road leads up a fertile plain northward for half an hour to an ancient khân, rather remarkable for its size and style of architecture, and further distinguished by a large oak-tree near it. The place is called Khân es Sâwieh, from a village of that name picturesquely perched on a rocky hill some distance west of the plain. The eastern mountains on the right of the road are curiously rounded off, and ascend by natural rocky terraces, like gigantic stairs, climbing to

[1] Josh. xviii. 23; 2 Chron. xiii. 19.

[2] John xi. 54.

the sky. Seen in early spring, covered with green grass or waving wheat fields, spangled with gay flowers, and glowing in the rich tints of evening sunlight, these terraces are very pretty; but when verdure and flowers are consumed by summer's drought and the blazing heat, they are painfully desolate and dreary.

Ascending thence for half an hour, we came to a ruined village called Z'atera, having Kŭbalân on the east, at the head of a rough ravine, and Yetma on the west, at no great distance from the road. Farther west, on a wooded hill, is Deir 'Agâsûn. Descending the rocky 'Akabet Z'atera, we came in another hour to the south end of Mount Gerizim, having the village of Kûza on the south of the deep wady, and 'Ain 'Abûs on the north. Villages are numerous on both sides of the road: Hauâra, on the lowest terraces of Mount Gerizim; Beita to the east; and farther east 'Awerta, where are the reputed tombs of Eleazar and Phinehas, the son and grandson of Aaron; Rajib is in the same region; and on the west is Kefr Kŭllîn. The plain through which we passed along the eastern base of Gerizim is called el Mŭkhna, but different parts of it are named from the villages to which they belong. This plain, extending many miles from south to north, is not very wide nor particularly fertile, though I have seen large parts of it clothed with luxuriant wheat and barley.

They are so now; for I remember that my imagination dwelt with special interest upon them, believing it was to those very fields that our blessed Saviour, when seated on Jacob's Well, directed the attention of his disciples, saying, "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."[1]

They were probably more luxuriant at that time than now, and the grain may have been in much the same state of forwardness for the sickle as at present. Alas! that after eighteen hundred years the moral fields in this very region are far from being white for the spiritual harvest. There is scarcely a more unpromising field for the missionary than this neighborhood of Nâblus and its little community of modern Samaritans.

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[1] John iv. 35, 38.

IV.

SAMARIA AND THE SAMARITANS.—SHECHEM.

Ride to Samaria.—Picturesque Road.—Beauty and Fertility of the Country.—The Vale of Nâblus.—Delight of Orientals in Abundance of Water.—Scenes and Scenery.—An Arab Writer's Estimation of the People of Nâblus.—" The Hill, Samaria."—Outlook from the Top of the Hill.—" Samaria as a Heap of the Field."—Site of Samaria.—Water abundant in the Neighborhood.—Access to the City from the East.—" Ahab, King of Israel, and Jehoshaphat, King of Judah." — The Void Place, the Summer Threshing-floor.—Samaria named after the Man who owned the Hill.—Biblical History of Samaria, and Extent of its Territory.—Captivity of Israel.—Elijah and Elisha.—Foreign Inhabitants of Samaria, and their Strange Religion.—The Priest of Bethel.—Ezra and Nehemiah reject the Samaritans.—Reception of the Samaritans by Alexander the Great.—Samaria in the Time of the Romans.—Herod the Great adorns the City with Public Buildings.—Sebaste, Augusta.—Group of Columns on the Top of the Hill.—The Street of Columns.—Group of Columns on the Hill-side.—Church of St. John the Baptist.—Crosses of the Order of St. John.—Neby Yehya.—The Tomb of the Baptist.—John beheaded at Machærus.—Temple and House of Baal.—Naaman the Syrian.—Lepers and Leprosy.—Charey-yonim.—Samaria in the Time of Christ.—Perpetual Hatred between Jew and Samaritan.—The Apostles preach in Samaria.—Samaria nominally Christian.—The Fatal Upas of Islam.—Ride from Samaria to the Summit of Gerizim.—Melchizedek, Abraham, Isaac.—Dean Stanley's Argument in Favor of Gerizim.—The Altar on Moriah.—The Sacrifice of Isaac not on Gerizim.—Major Wilson's Description of the Ruins on Gerizim.—The Castle.—The Church.—The Holy Place of the Samaritans.—" The Twelve Stones."—The Samaritan Temple.—Khŭrbet Louzah, Luz.—Josephus's Account of the Samaritan Temple, and its Destruction by Hyrcanus.—The Samaritans worshipping at the Ruins in the Time of Christ.—Observance of the Great Feasts by the Modern Samaritans.—History of the Ancient and Modern Samaritans. — The Samaritan Pentateuch.—Nâblus, Shechem.—Biblical References to Shechem.—The Oak of Moreh.—The Convocation of the Tribes at Shechem.—" The Blessings and Cursings " on Gerizim and Ebal.—The Law written on the Stones at Mount Ebal.—Joseph buried at Shechem.—Shechem a City of Refuge.—Jotham's Parable.—Nâblus, Neapolis.

May 8th.

NÂBLUS, the ancient Shechem and the Roman Neapolis, is by far the most important city of Central Palestine; we shall, therefore, remain more than one day here, in order to become familiar with the historical sites and scenes within and around it. For this purpose our place of encampment, west of the city, is in every respect convenient and pleasant. The air is cool, and the day promises to be delightful; so, leaving our tents in charge of the head muleteer, we will ride over to Samaria, the modern Sebŭstieh, this morning, and afterwards visit the site of the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim.

My notes of former visits through this region contain the names of many villages pleasantly situated on the mountain-sides between Nâblus and Sebŭstieh, but it would be tedious to repeat names which you can neither pronounce nor remember. The whole country is studded with villages, the plains clothed with grass or grain, and the rounded hills are covered with orchards of olive, fig, pomegranate, and other trees. There is a path farther to the right, and higher up the mountain-side, than the one we propose to follow, which is quite picturesque, especially as it descends towards Sebŭstieh, being overshadowed by tall trees, interspersed with gardens and fruit orchards; and in that vicinity most of the fountains that water the fields around Samaria take their rise. Along the ordinary road upon which we are now the prospects are more varied and interesting, and the first view of Samaria, from the hill-top on the south-east, is the most impressive one can get.

May 8th. Evening.

Our excursions to-day have given me a much more favorable idea of the beauty and fertility of this part of the Holy Land, the royal borough of the Kingdom of Israel, and the seat of Samaritan worship in the time of Christ. One may be excused for becoming somewhat enthusiastic over this pretty vale of Nâblus, sparkling with fountains and streams, verdant with olive-groves and fig-orchards, interspersed with walnut, apple, apricot, orange, quince, pomegranate, and other trees and shrubs.

The fruit-bearing trees grow here to a size quite unusual in this country, and all this exceptional fertility is due to those noble fountains with which the valley of Nâblus abounds. Nothing is more delightful, at least in this dry and thirsty land, than "the laugh of the mountain," the music of rills and brooks as they leap from terrace to terrace in garden or field, refreshing every green thing on their way with the waters of life. We have learned by experience to comprehend the exquisite pleasure which such an abundance of "living water" gives to the Oriental mind.

I can enjoy the scenes and scenery around Nâblus, and between it and Samaria, as well as any Oriental: the noisy brook driving primitive flour-mills that stand along either side of the road to Sebŭstieh, and "chatter, chatter" as they grind; high mountains on the right and left, with many a village upon their terraced sides, amidst olive-groves and fields of yellow corn; flocks of sheep and goats at pasture under the eyes of watchful shepherds; boys and girls at play; and men and women pursuing their peaceful labors in the open country—such was the picture presented this morning. What must that region have been when Samaria was a royal capital!

But now "every prospect pleases, and only man is vile," you might safely add, for the people are exceptionally rude and lawless. You must have noticed that the peasants coming to market, or to the mills, were all armed, and ready at any moment for a row or a fight. An Arab writer says, "The sheikhs of Nâblus and its neighborhood are robbers; their women pretty, but proud; the peasants insolent and quarrelsome." This witness is true of Nâblus and Sebŭstieh, as travellers often experience even at the present day. It seems always to have been thus, from the time when Simeon and Levi with "instruments of cruelty" massacred the inhabitants of Shechem, down to the current hour.

Our ride this morning to Sebŭstieh or Samaria was, however, altogether peaceful and pleasant, and the view of the site as we rose over the shoulder of the mountain east of it was striking and impressive. "The hill Samaria" rising symmetrically to a considerable height westward, terrace above terrace; the ruined Church of St. John the Baptist overhanging the eastern brow of the hill; the village above it, and beyond the cluster of large columns crowning the western summit—these are the principal features of that first view. And the outlook from the stand-point on the top of "the hill" over the wide expanse of mountain and valley and plain, to the sea-coast of Cæsarea, and the Bay of Acre north of Carmel, was precisely the prospect I was prepared to see. So also was the colonnade along the southern slope of the hill. Nothing seemed out of place or unfamiliar to me. Ruins everywhere; in the valley, on the hill-side, and on the mountain-top, amidst the olive-groves, the wheat fields, and the vineyards, forcibly bringing before the mind the wrath of God against that city. "Therefore I will make Samaria as an heap of the field, and as plantings of a vineyard: and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundations thereof."[1]

The hill of Samaria could have been encompassed by a single wall, and it appears to have been very strongly fortified. Shalmaneser, King of Assyria, besieged it three years before he was able to capture it.[2]

By universal consent, the site of this celebrated capital is admitted to be delightful. It is a large, isolated hill, rising, by successive terraces, several hundred feet above the valleys which surround it. In shape it is oval, and the smaller and lower end unites it to the neighboring mountain on the east. There is no fountain on the hill, and during a siege the inhabitants must have depended upon cisterns. Water, however, is abundant in the neighborhood. There is a good spring a short distance to the south-east, and the brook coming from the mountains of Nâblus flows down the valley on the south of the hill, and is large enough to drive many a mill. In winter a fine mill-stream also flows past the north side of the hill. All these unite at the bottom of the plain in Wady esh Sha'îr west of the hill, and form part of the river, as I am told, which is called Abu Zabûra, at the sea south of Cæsarea.

The entire site of Samaria is covered with rubbish, indicating the existence, and repeated destruction, of a large city.

Access to the place must have been from the eastern side, fo on every other the valleys are deep and the declivity precipitous.

On some of the terraces on that side, I suppose, Ahab "the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah sat each on his throne, having put on their robes, in a void place in the entrance of the gate of Samaria," as recorded in the tenth verse of the twenty-second chapter of 1 Kings.

Our translation does not indicate the true locality as it is given

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[1] Micah i. 6.

[2] 2 Kings xviii. 9, 10.

SEBUSTIEH—SAMARIA.

in the Hebrew. The thrones of the kings were not set "in a void place in the entrance of the gate." The word is that for the summer threshing-floor, corresponding to the Arabic baidar. These threshing-floors are frequently the only level and smooth places near the entrance to agricultural villages and towns; indeed, there is often no other suitable spot to pitch one's tents. They frequently rise in successive terraces, one above another as at Sebŭstieh, forming admirable platforms for two such royal courts, with their hundreds of prophets and crowds of retainers. Samaria was an agricultural city, in the centre of a rich grain-growing country; and as at this day so it was then, I believe, the farmers brought their crops from the surrounding fields to the "floors," there to be threshed out under the mowrej, and winnowed in the wind. And on those threshing-floors, I imagine, the august assembly was convened, at which it was decided to undertake that disastrous expedition against Ramoth-gilead.

It is remarkable that Samaria took its name from the man who owned the hill, and not from Omri, the king who built the city.

Nearly everything that is known about ancient Samaria is derived from the Bible. The account of the origin of the city is given in these few words: "In the thirty and first year of Asa king of Judah began Omri to reign over Israel. And he bought the hill Samaria of Shemer for two talents of silver, and built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill, Samaria."[1] The subsequent history of the city and the kingdom is one of rebellion, apostasy, crime, and captivity. It became the rival of Jerusalem, and the royal capital of the Kings of Israel. There was "reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal;" there Jezebel issued her orders and "slew the prophets of the Lord," and the unfortunate Naboth, because of his vineyard; and from there the captives of Israel were "carried away into Assyria, and put" by the rivers of waters "in the cities of the Medes."

It should be remembered, however, that Samaria soon became a geographical term for a territory much larger than that of the Roman province of the same name in the time of Christ, and that it had for centuries a wide and extended application. It included the entire inheritance of the Ten Tribes, both east and west of the Jordan, and the inhabitants of those regions must have been called Samaritans. This is evident from the frequent allusions to Samaria in the Books of the Old Testament. The extent of that territory, however, was greatly contracted in after years by the absorption of the tribes of Simeon and Benjamin, and the southern portion of the tribe of Dan, into the kingdom of Judah, and by the invasions and conquests of the Kings of Assyria.

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[1] 1 Kings xvi. 23, 24.

We read in 2 Kings, "In those days the Lord began to cut Israel short: and Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel; from Jordan eastward, all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, and the Reubenites, and the Manassites, from Aroer, which is by the river Arnon, even [to] Gilead and Bashan."[1] Nearly a century later, "Pul the king of Assyria came against the land: and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that his hand might be with him to confirm the kingdom in his hand. And Menahem exacted the money of Israel, even of all the mighty men of wealth, of each man fifty shekels of silver, to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria turned back, and stayed not there in the land."[2] Thirty years later "The God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Tilgath-pilneser king of Assyria, in the days of Pekah king of Israel, and he took Ijon, and Abel-beth-maachah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, and all the land of Naphtali; even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and carried them captive to Assyria."[3] Finally, "Shalmaneser the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria. And the Lord rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria."[4]

It was during the years of apostasy, corruption, and general misrule that preceded this catastrophe, and led to it, that the great prophets Elijah and Elisha dwelt amongst the people, and labored to recall them to the worship of Jehovah; but, alas! in vain. Neither prophetic warnings and denunciations, nor amazing miracles and judgments, could bring the nation to repentance and reformation. "They served idols; they left all the commandments of the Lord their God; they made them molten images, even two calves, and they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger," until they were all but utterly destroyed.[1]

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[1] 2 Kings x. 32, 33.

[2] 2 Kings xv. 19, 20.

[3] 2 Kings xv. 29; 1 Chron. v. 26.

[4] 2 Kings xvii. 3, 5, 6, 20, 23.

At least half a century later "the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel. And so it was at the beginning of their dwelling there, that they feared not the Lord: therefore the Lord sent lions among them, which slew some of them." Believing that this calamity befell them because they knew not the God of Israel, they petitioned the king to send them some one to "teach them the manner of the God of the land," which he did, selecting for that purpose one of the priests who had been carried away from Samaria. He "came and dwelt in Beth-el, and taught them how they should fear the Lord." But it was a strange sort of religion; "every nation made gods of their own. The men of Babylon made Succoth-benoth, and the men of Cuth made Nergal, and the men of Hamath made Ashima, and the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim. So they feared the Lord, and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations" from whence they came.[2]

Originally heathen, owing doubtless to the residence of the Israelitish priest of Bethel amongst them, they appear to have gradually dropped most of their religious rites and abominable customs; and, after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian Captivity, the Samaritans professed to be worshippers of Jehovah, and laid claim to be admitted to the rights of the true people of God. They were

[1] 2 Kings xvii. 12–17.

[2] 2 Kings xvii. 24–33.

rejected, however, by Ezra and Nehemiah, and hence the bitter hatred between the two people.[1] Amongst the Jews it became a term of utmost reproach to call one of their own sect a Samaritan.

After the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, there is a hiatus in the history of Samaria down to the conquest of this country by Alexander the Great. Shechem appears to have become by that time the centre of the Samaritan people. Samaria, however, was still sufficiently important to attract the attention of Alexander, who, according to Josephus, made a present of it to the Jews, and, in the eleventh book of his Antiquities, he gives a curious and rather doubtful account of the reception which the Shechemites received from the Macedonian conqueror.[2]

The city of Samaria is never once mentioned, I believe, in the Books of the Maccabees. The country is often alluded to, and from this silence regarding the city, it is perhaps a fair inference that the Samaritans were held in such abomination by those most zealous Jews that they avoided all mention of them.

In the time of the Romans Palestine was divided into three distinct provinces—Judea on the south, Galilee on the north, and Samaria between the two. The geographical limits of this province are given by Josephus in general terms, though with sufficient exactness, especially in regard to the nature of the land and its agricultural products. According to his statement, all the territory south of the plain of Esdraelon to the northern boundary of Benjamin was included in the province of Samaria. This was the country called Samaria in the New Testament, and the inhabitants were the Samaritans. They were not Jews, but the descendants of the mingled people who had been settled in that region by the King of Assyria about seven hundred years before Christ.

According to Josephus, John Hyrcanus took Samaria "after a year's siege, and demolished it entirely." Pompey restored it to its original inhabitants; and Gabinius, some time afterwards, gave orders to rebuild the city, which had long been desolate. Augustus added Samaria to the kingdom of Herod the Great, who adorned it with splendid public buildings, palace, temple, theatre, fountains, and colonnades, and strongly fortified it. He gave it the name of Sebaste, in honor of his friend and patron, that being the Greek equivalent for the Latin name Augusta.

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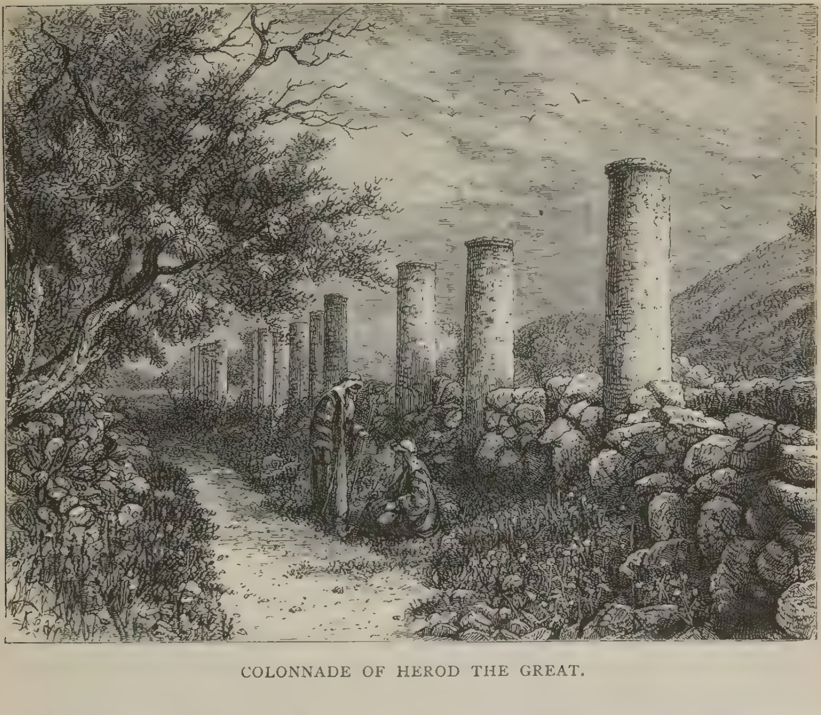
[1] Ezra iv. 1–6; Neh. ii. 19, 20.

[2] Ant. xi. viii. 6.

The existing remains, consisting, as we have seen, mainly of colonnades, must certainly date back to the time of Herod, and perhaps many of the columns are much older.

We can add little or nothing to Dr. Robinson's description of them. He says: "It is now in vain to look for the foundations and stones of the ancient city. Yet, on approaching the summit [of the hill], we came suddenly upon an area once surrounded by limestone columns, of which fifteen are still standing and two prostrate. They measured seven feet nine inches in circumference.



COLONNADE OF HEROD THE GREAT.

"Descending the hill, we came to the very remarkable colonnade which once ran along the belt of level ground on the south side of the hill, apparently quite around to the site of the present village. It begins at a mass of ruins which may have been a temple, or more probably an arch of triumph, looking out over the green valley and towards the sea, forming, apparently, the entrance to the city on this side. From here the colonnade runs for about a thousand feet, and then curves to the left, following the base of the hill. In the western part about sixty limestone columns are still erect, and farther east are some twenty more standing irregularly at various intervals. Many more than these lie prostrate; and we could trace whole columns or fragments nearly to the village. The columns were sixteen feet high, two feet in diameter at the base, and one foot eight inches at the top. The capitals are gone; we could nowhere find a trace of them remaining. The width of the colonnade was fifty feet; its whole length not much less than three thousand feet."[1]

This double colonnade was doubtless erected by Herod as an ornament to the main street of the city, like that of "Tadmor in the wilderness," built by Solomon, and the one at Gerasa, a city of the Decapolis, on the east of the Jordan.

There is a group of fifteen columns, and one-half of the sixteenth, standing on what appears to have been an artificial nook, or terrace, low down on the north-eastern side of the hill. They form part of a quadrangle one hundred and ninety-six paces from east to west, and sixty-four from north to south. They are about three paces apart, and, when the colonnade was complete, may have numbered one hundred and seventy columns. It is possible that they adorned one of Herod's public buildings, all traces of which have entirely disappeared.

The most conspicuous ruin at Sebŭstieh, however, is the Church of St. John the Baptist, a part of which has been converted into a mosk.

Major Wilson of the Palestine Exploration Fund says that "the church is on the site of an old city gate, from which 'the street of columns' started, and ran round the hill eastward. The northern side and north-west tower are of older date than the Crusades—early Saracenic." But, as Dr. Robinson remarks, "The presence of so many crosses of the Knights of St. John, and the circumstance that the spot was regarded as the sepulchre of their patron saint, render it probable that the church may have been erected by that order."

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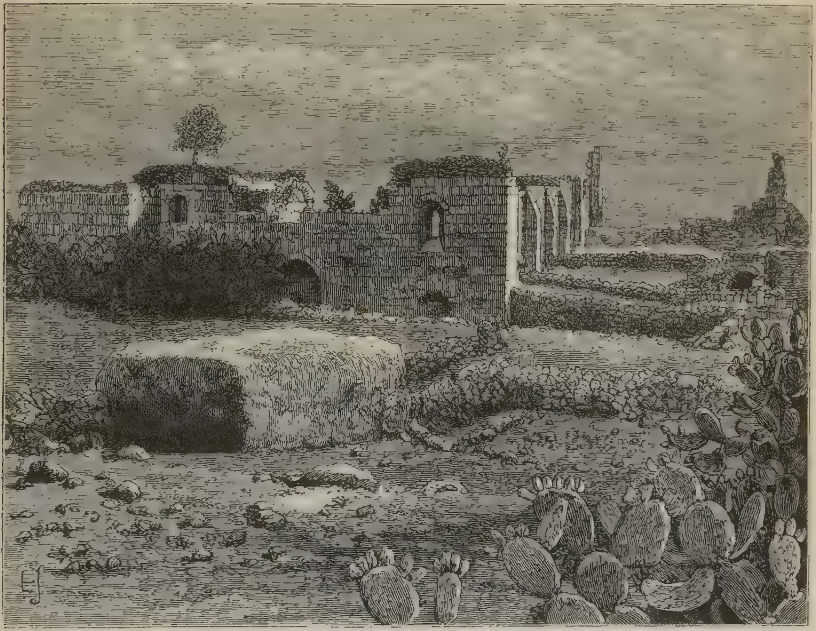
[1] Rob. Res. vol. ii. p. 307, 308.

Including the porch, the church is about one hundred and sixty-five feet long, and seventy-five feet broad. The walls and a portion of the apse, which occupies the entire eastern end, and is rounded in form, are still standing to a considerable height. The former are smooth, and are supported on the south side by slender buttresses. The nave and the two aisles are separated from each other by square pillars and columns; the capitals are Corinthian, with palm ornamentation. The arches of the windows are round, but those in the body of the church were pointed, as were also those on the inside of the apse. In a modern wall are three marble tablets, on which are sculptured the crosses of the order of St. John. The Moslems have mutilated them, as is their usual custom. The walls now enclose an open court, in the centre of which rises the modern Moslem dome of Neby Yehya over the reputed tomb or prison of John the Baptist. The tomb is the usual rock-cut grotto, reached by about twenty-five steps, and having two tiers of loculi. Besides



NEBY YEHYA—CHURCH OF ST. JOHN.

being the grave of the Baptist, tradition asserts that Obadiah and Elisha were buried there.

It is a strange coincidence, yet none the less impressive, to find lingering about the ruins of Israel's capital the name and fame of such characters as Ahab and Herod, Jezebel and Herodias, as well as those of their blameless victims, Naboth and John the Baptist.

In the case of John, however, the New Testament nowhere informs us where he was imprisoned, or where beheaded; but Josephus expressly states that the Baptist was confined by Herod in the fortress of Machærus, on the east of the Dead Sea, and doubtless it was to that place that "his disciples came, and took up the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus."[1]

Many of the wonderful passages in the lives of Elijah and Elisha are connected with Samaria and her idolatrous and bloody rulers. I imagine that the level space on the topmost terrace of the hill, where are the sixteen large columns, marks the site of the great temple and "house of Baal," which Jehu utterly "brake down," after that treacherous slaughter of Baal's priests and worshippers recorded in the tenth chapter of 2 Kings. It was to Samaria that Naaman the Syrian, the Damascene leper, came to be healed—a remarkable narrative, and very suggestive. That terrible disease still clings to Damascus, and is now, as it was then, incurable by man.

One is tempted to inquire why the power of healing the leper, which so signally honored the God of Israel at that time in the eyes of all nations, should have been so rarely bestowed. There were other lepers "in Israel in the time of Elisha;" indeed, Christ says there were many of them, and yet "none was cleansed saving Naaman the Syrian."[2]

It is obvious that this reserve in putting forth divine power is in strict accordance with the entire economy of miraculous manifestation. Gehazi, for his cupidity, had this terrible disease laid upon him, with the fearful doom added that it should cleave unto his seed forever; and who can tell but that the victims of this horrid plague, now seen about Sebŭstieh and at Nâblus, the present home of all the Samaritans, may be the heirs of that heritage of Gehazi.[3]

The lepers mentioned in chapter seven of 2 Kings seem to have been shut out of Samaria even when it was closely besieged by Benhadad. Is it common now to compel lepers to dwell outside of the villages and towns?

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[1] Ant. xviii. v. 2; Matt. xiv. 12.

[2] Luke iv. 27.

[3] 2 Kings v. 27.

Not in all places; but they are everywhere regarded as unclean, shunned as dangerous, and obliged to live by themselves. Where their numbers are considerable, as at Damascus, Nâblus, and Jerusalem, a separate abode is allotted to them generally without the walls of the city. Those at Samaria were outside "at the entering in of the gate," and I have seen lepers cast out of the villages where they resided.

Lepers often gather near the gates that they may beg of those who go in and out; and those entrances usually have arched recesses about them, and it was quite possible that those four lepers could remain there in safety during so strait a siege, even, as that of Samaria.[1]

What have you to say about that extraordinary article called "doves' dung," which was sold at a high price during that terrible siege of Benhadad?

The Hebrew charey′-yonim, or dib-yonim, may have been a name for a coarse and cheap sort of food, a kind of bean, as some think, to which this whimsical title was given. Nor am I surprised at it, for Orientals give sometimes quaint, obscure, and ridiculous names to their edible products. I would, therefore, not translate at all, but let the passage read thus: "The fourth part of a cab of charey′-yonim for five pieces of silver;" and be content with that until we know what charey′-yonim really is.

The incidents referring to Samaria and the Samaritans in the time of Christ indicate that the old hatred between the two people was perpetuated in all its bitterness. "The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans," said the woman at Jacob's Well.[2] "Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil," said the Jews to Jesus.[3]

True; and James and John inquire of our Lord, "Wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them?" referring to the "village of the Samaritans" that refused to entertain Jesus and his disciples when they were journeying through Samaria to Jerusalem. "But he turned, and rebuked them, and said,

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[1] 2 Kings vii. 3–11.

[2] John iv. 9.

[3] John viii. 48.

Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."[1] It deserves to be noticed that Jesus always treated the Samaritans with respect and forbearance, and so did the apostles after his resurrection. True it is that, in the very initiation of his mission work, Christ directed the disciples not to enter "into any city of the Samaritans." They were first to "go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel;" but this prohibition was temporary.[2] Christ himself subsequently visited and taught them without reserve or hesitation, and the apostles preached the Gospel to them, and received the converts into full Christian fellowship, as we learn from the eighth chapter of Acts.

Samaria early became nominally Christian, and its bishops are often mentioned in the Records of the Ecclesiastical Councils. In the seventh century it, of course, fell under Muhammedan misrule, and, with the exception of the brief period when the Crusaders held the country, has so continued down to the present day. Beneath the fatal upas of Islam it has gradually withered away, growing smaller by degrees, though not beautifully less, until finally it has subsided into the wretched village which we have this day visited. Nor can there be any resurrection to its ancient life and greatness. The shadow on the dial of the world's progress must be turned back very many degrees ere it will be possible for even Palestine itself to regain much of its former importance, and Samaria will ever remain what it is now—an inconsiderable town in a small province of a great empire.

The ride through the country from Samaria to the summit of Gerizim strongly, even painfully, impressed me with the conviction that there are many sites and scenes, and extensive regions, in the Land of Promise, "in the length of it, and in the breadth of it," which we have not visited.

The fact is plain enough; but those outlying and unvisited districts must be left for organized expeditions to explore. It is much beyond the possibilities of our pilgrimage so to do, and we may as well recognize this at once, and acknowledge it too, for the farther we go the more manifest will it become.

I was often tempted to stop and admire the ever-changing beau-

[1] Luke ix. 51–56.

[2] Matt. x. 5, 6.

ties of the scenery. Every mile of our progress northward from Jerusalem and her hard, rocky surroundings, has been an improvement; and certainly the country through which we passed to-day presents a most striking and delightful contrast to its barren hills.

The climb to the top of Gerizim, though somewhat fatiguing, should never be omitted by any traveller. The panorama there presented to view is about the most extensive and imposing in all Palestine; and without reference to the historic importance of the locality, the visitor will linger long, and depart with regret.

The Samaritans and their patrons claim as occurring on the site of their temple two very important Biblical events: that there, and not at Jerusalem, Melchizedek met Abraham; and that on Gerizim, and not Moriah, the patriarch offered his son Isaac; and, if I understand Dean Stanley aright, he concurs in the justness of these pretensions.

He does, and argues at some length to substantiate those claims; but that is not the most successful effort of that observant traveller and able writer. Dean Stanley yields cheerfully to the paramount authority of the Bible on all points where its indications are clear and decisive, and it seems to me that the positive assertion that Melchizedek was King of Salem, makes it certain that Abraham did not meet him in Gerizim. Shechem was not called Salem, nor was there any place on Gerizim that bore this name. There is the modern village of Shâlim east of it, towards Jordan, and Jerome, after Theodotus, supposed that Melchizedek reigned there, but even this does not favor the cause of the Samaritans.

The philological argument drawn from *Ar*-Gerizim has no appreciable weight in the case; and as to the route which Abraham followed in returning from Dan to Hebron, it would naturally be on the western side of the lakes Merom and Tiberias. I have been round the eastern side of both, and believe that he could not have selected that road, encumbered as he was with a large company of rescued captives and their goods. They would be obliged to make long detours to get round impracticable gorges, and for a great part of the way there is a total lack of water. Nor could he have followed the valley of the Jordan. No one who has ever traversed that desolate Ghôr will believe that his great company took that course; and, after wandering over those regions in all directions, I am convinced that the way by which Abraham led back the people of Sodom was along the ordinary road through Galilee to Jerusalem. This, it is true, would bring him near Nâblus, and if there was any evidence that Melchizedek reigned there, the meeting might have taken place on Gerizim, as the Samaritans affirm; but there is no such evidence, and this route would also bring Abraham to Jerusalem, where the King of Sodom most naturally met him "at the King's dale."

Dean Stanley supposes that the King of Sodom went round the eastern shore of the Dead Sea; but that is quite impossible, unless he made a long detour through the interior. No doubt, therefore, Abraham met Melchizedek at Jerusalem, and, having restored the goods and the captives to the King of Sodom, he returned by way of Bethlehem to his home on the plain of Mamre. I cannot avoid the impression that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews meant that the Salem of which the "priest of the most high God" was king was Jerusalem, and in the seventy-sixth Psalm the Holy City is by implication called Salem. Josephus asserts that "they afterwards called it Salem Jerusalem." Such a chain of evidence cannot be broken by the weight of a hundred Samaritan traditions, detailed with much confidence by Ya'kôb esh Shelaby of Nâblus, sheikh of all the holy Samaritans.

To maintain that the original sanctuary of the most high God was on Gerizim, and not at Jerusalem, is contrary to all the Biblical indications, so far as I can understand them. Salvation was of the Jews, not of the Samaritans; the spiritual worship of the Father was in Jerusalem, not on Gerizim; and from the days of Sanballat devout worshippers of Jehovah regarded the temple on Gerizim with abhorrence. Now, if that had been the original shrine, why was not this most important fact urged by "Sanballat and Tobiah, and the rest," in their proposals to Nehemiah; and if Melchizedek reigned in Shechem, and Abraham offered up Isaac on Gerizim, why do we hear nothing of those things to strengthen their cause?

In regard to the true site of that most wonderful act of Abraham, I believe it was on Mount Moriah, where long afterwards the altar of burnt sacrifice was erected by Solomon, and not far from the spot where that greater sacrifice of an infinitely greater Son was finally offered. Abraham could not come with his loaded ass from Beersheba to Nâblus in the time specified. On the third day he arrived early enough to leave the servants "afar off," and walk with Isaac bearing the sacrificial wood to the mountain which God had shown him; there build the altar, arrange the wood, bind his son, and stretch forth his hand to slay him; and there was time, too, to take and offer up the ram in Isaac's place. That all this could have been done at Nâblus on the third day of their journey is incredible. It has always appeared to me, since I first travelled over the country myself, that even Jerusalem was too far off from Beersheba for the tenor of the narrative, but Nâblus is nearly two days' ride farther north!

Nor will the suggestion that Abraham came up through Philistia and then turned eastward into the mountain bear examination. The supposition is entirely gratuitous, and at variance with all the lines of patriarchal travel through the country, nor does it render the achievement of the journey in three days any more feasible. Let us rejoice in being permitted to rest with entire confidence in the correctness of our received tradition that the priest of the most high God reigned in Jerusalem, and that Abraham made that typical sacrifice of his son on Moriah, and not on Gerizim. And here, again, Josephus asserts distinctly that the sacrifice of Isaac was on the mount where the temple was afterwards erected.[1]

In regard to the celebrated temple itself on Mount Gerizim, recent explorations have brought to light foundations, cisterns, paved platforms, and other remains much more extensive and complicated than had been hitherto known or suspected. Major Wilson's description will render minute details unnecessary. He says:

"The summit of Gerizim is a small level plateau, having its largest dimensions nearly north and south. The northern end is occupied by the ruins of a castle and church, the southern by smaller remains, principally low and irregular built walls. In the midst of the latter is a sloping rock, which is regarded by the Samaritans with much veneration; it is said to be the site of the altar of their temple, and they remove their shoes when approaching it. At the

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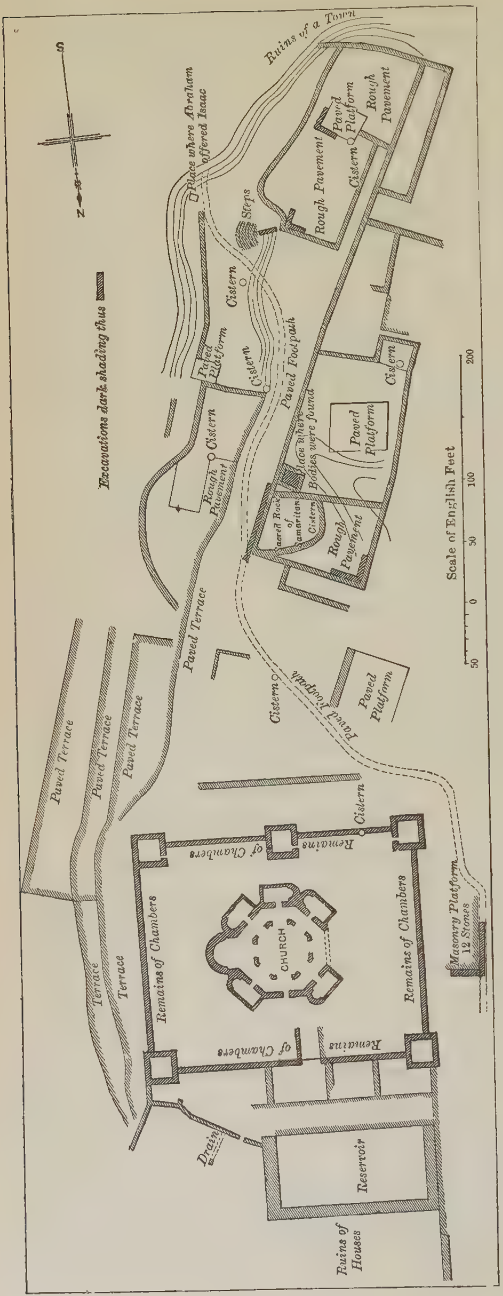
[1] Ant. i. xiii. 2.



PLAN OF THE RUINS ON MOUNT GERIZIM.

eastern edge of the plateau, a small cavity in the rock is shown as the place on which Abraham offered up Isaac. West of the castle, and a short distance down the hill, some massive foundations are pointed out as the 'twelve stones' which were set up by Joshua after the reading of the law.

"Excavations were made under the superintendence of Lieutenant Anderson, and a plan was taken of the ruins.

"The castle is rectangular, with flanking towers at each end of its angles; on the eastern side are the remains of several chambers, and over the door of one of them is a Greek cross. The walls are built of well-dressed stones, which have marginal drafts, and are set without mortar; many of them appear to have been taken from earlier buildings.

"The church is octagonal. On the eastern side is an apse; on the northern the main entrance; on five sides there are small chapels; and on the eighth side there was probably a sixth chapel; but this could not be ascertained, as the foundations had been almost entirely removed. There is an inner octagon which gives the plan some resemblance to that of the "Dome of the Rock" at Jerusalem. The flooring is partly of marble, partly of tiles, and below this a platform of rough masonry was found. The only capital uncovered was of a debased Corinthian order. The church is believed to have been built by Justinian, *circa* A.D. 533.

"The 'holy place' of the Samaritans is a portion of the natural rock, dipping to the north-west, and draining into a cistern half full of stones; an excavation in an adjoining enclosure uncovered a mass of human bones lying on a thin layer of some dark substance, which had stained the rock beneath to a dark burnt-amber color. The Amran said they were bodies of priests, anointed with consecrated oil; but they seemed rather to be hasty interments, such as would be made in time of war.

"There are several platforms of unhewn stone, somewhat similar to the praying places in the Haram at Jerusalem; and one of these, near the place at which Abraham is said to have offered up Isaac, is approached by a curious flight of circular steps.

"The 'twelve stones' form part of a solid platform of unhewn masonry: there are four courses of stones, and the upper, shown as the 'twelve stones,' is set back eight inches: two of the stones were turned over, but no trace of an inscription was found on them. The stone when exposed to the air is of a dark bluish-gray color, but when newly broken it has a cream-colored appearance.

"East of the castle are the remains of three platforms, and below them, on the slope of the hill, are broken terraces: the platforms have evidently been built to support some building on the top of the hill, and add to its appearance; and they, as well as the 'twelve stones,' may not improbably have formed part of the substructure of the Samaritan Temple. Of the temple itself there is nothing left; but, to judge from the appearance and construction of the platforms, it probably stood on the site now occupied by the ruins of the church and castle; if it were south of the castle, every stone must have been removed, as the ground was carefully examined, and no trace of the foundations of any large building was found.

"North of the castle is a large pool; and below this, and surrounding the hill on all sides, are the ruins of a considerable town, to which no distinctive name could be obtained.

RUINS ON GERIZIM.—THE TWELVE STONES.

"Near the Samaritan place of sacrifice, at the western foot of the peak, are some considerable ruins, to which every one we asked gave the name which Mons. De Sacy heard, Khŭrbet Louzah. This Dean Stanley identifies with the second Luz, founded by the inhabitants of Luz when expelled by the Ephraimites from Bethel.

"At the extremity of the arm running northward from the castle is a mound, partly artificial, and isolated from the ridge by a deep ditch. There are traces of steps on the four sides leading to the summit of the mound, which was occupied by a building fifty-three feet square, having walls of great thickness. Below the mound, on the north, are some excavations in the rock, apparently for holding water."

This is the most complete and reliable description of these ruins that exists, and the reading public is much indebted to Major Wilson for the painstaking task of bringing them to the light of day.

One naturally desires to know something about the age, origin, and history of the Samaritan Temple, who erected it, and when and by whom was it destroyed?

The materials from which to gather the information are far from abundant or satisfactory. I have met with no authority or credible evidence that any part of Gerizim was held sacred until after the final rupture between the Jews and the Samaritans, on the refusal of Nehemiah to allow the latter to aid in the erection of the Temple at Jerusalem, or to participate in the religious ceremonies of the Jews. The account is given at length in the Book of Nehemiah.[1]

Josephus largely amplifies the story in the seventh and eighth chapters of the eleventh book of his Antiquities, from which it appears that Manasseh, the brother of Jaddua, the high-priest, had married Micaso, the daughter of Sanballat, who, in order to prevail upon him not to repudiate his daughter, in obedience to the mandate of Nehemiah, engaged to erect a rival temple on Mount Gerizim, and to make him high-priest over the Samaritan people. While Alexander the Great was besieging Tyre, Sanballat, taking with him seven thousand of his subjects, resorted to him, and, being favorably received, he thereupon took courage and spoke to Alexander about their affairs, saying that "he had a son-in-law, Manasseh, who was brother to the high-priest Jaddua; and that there were many others of his own nation now with him that were desirous to have a temple in the places subject to him." Having convinced Alexander that it would be a wise political measure to divide the Jewish people by the erection of such a temple, he was, accordingly, granted permission so to do. "Whereupon Sanballat used the utmost diligence and built the temple, and made Manasseh the priest" over it.[1]

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[1] Neh. ii.; iv.; vi.

This temple, according to the same authority, was destroyed by Hyrcanus one hundred and twenty-nine years before Christ, after it had stood two hundred years.[2]

It is possible, certainly, that the edifice which Hyrcanus destroyed may have been built at the time of Alexander; but that was not the one erected by Sanballat during the lifetime of Nehemiah, for it is not credible that he and his son-in-law, Manasseh, continued to live to so late a period. The truth appears to be that the temple was at least commenced at the time of Nehemiah; that is, four hundred and ten years before our era.

I was surprised at the extent of the ruins. They are scattered over a large part of the summit of the mountain in great heaps of shapeless rubbish, with but few specimens of ancient work or even of solid masonry. The visitor finds it impossible to discover any definite plan in the construction of the various edifices.

Josephus states that the temple was constructed in imitation of the one in Jerusalem; but, to judge from the character of the existing remains, it must have been inferior to it in every respect. Besides the temple, there appear to have been other buildings, probably erected at different times and for various purposes, surrounded by one, if not two walls.

There is no account extant that this temple was rebuilt, but, doubtless, the Samaritans continued to worship at the ruins. To them the woman of Samaria probably referred when she said, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain;" and the Saviour alluded to the temple itself when he replied, "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. God is a spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."[3]

It is a singular instance of the tenacity with which nations cling to the altars of their forefathers that, from that day to this, these poor Samaritans have continued to worship the Father at these same ruins, not "in spirit and truth," it is to be feared, but in form and fanaticism, according to the tradition of their elders.

[1] Ant. xi. viii. 4.

[2] Ant. xiii. ix. 1.

[3] John iv. 20, 21, 24.

Still, all who have had the opportunity to witness their mode of celebrating the great Festivals of the Passover, the Feast of Tabernacles, and the like, represent the scenes then enacted at those ruins on Mount Gerizim as impressive, picturesque, and even affecting.

To enter into minute details of those ceremonies would be exceedingly tedious, as they occupy several days, in accordance with the law of Moses. The observance of the Passover, the most important feast of the Samaritans, and the Feast of Tabernacles, in the autumn, is substantially as follows:

"During the days of unleavened bread, the Samaritans live in tents on the mountain [Gerizim], near to the ruins. On the fourteenth day of the first month, the whole congregation, men, women, and children, except such as are ceremonially unclean, being assembled, the priest stands forth on a mound, and reads, in a solemn and impressive voice, the description of the Exodus.[1]

"In a trench, previously prepared, a fire is kindled, and two caldrons of water are placed over it. A round pit is dug, in the form of a well, and it is heated to serve as an oven. Then lambs are brought, in sufficiency for the whole community. Seven is now the usual number. At sunset, seven men, in white dresses, take each a lamb before him, and at the utterance of a particular word in the service all seven lambs are slain at the same instant.[2] Every member of the congregation then dips his hand in the blood of the dying victims, and besmears his forehead with it, sometimes only those of the women and children.

"Boiling water from the caldrons is poured over the fleece, which causes the wool to leave the skin without much difficulty. It is plucked off with great nicety. The bodies of the lambs are examined, lest there be any blemish. The right shoulder and the hamstrings are cut off and thrown on the heap of offal, to be burnt with the wool.

"The seven bodies are then spitted, and forced into the hot bake-oven. A trellis-work is then placed over the top of the oven, which is covered with grass and mud, to keep in all the heat. A few hours after sunset they are withdrawn, and the Samaritans, each 'with his loins girt, and a staff in his hand,' eat hastily and greedily of the food thus prepared.[1] The scraps of meat, wool, and bone are carefully sought for, and burnt on the heap, that not a morsel may remain.[2] The entire services occupy the greater part of the day, and are prolonged into the night. Early on the morning of the fifteenth day, the people generally return to their avocations in the city.

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[1] Exod. xii. 1–11.

[2] Exod. xii. 6.

"The Feast of Tabernacles is also kept 'in this mountain.' It happens in the early part of the autumn, when tent-life is very pleasant and refreshing. The people 'take the branches of goodly trees,' such as the evergreen oak and the arbutus, and they 'make booths,' roofing them with interlacing willows, pliant palm fronds, and boughs of the glossy-leaved citron and lemon trees, with the green fruit hanging from them in clusters. For seven days the people dwell there, rejoicing and giving thanks to God."[3]

The history of this peculiar people has enlisted, in modern times, the researches of many learned critics, commentators, and travellers. Of course our resumé must be brief and condensed.

For several centuries after the revolt of the Ten Tribes under Jeroboam, as you may remember, Samaria and Samaritan were synonymous terms, and applied to the people and the kingdom of Israel, as distinct from the inhabitants of the kingdom of Judah; and this name has adhered to their descendants down to the current hour. Most of the learned who have written about the modern Samaritans repudiate their claim to Israelitish ancestry, and maintain that the entire Hebrew inhabitants of the land were carried away by the Kings of Assyria, and never returned. The Biblical accounts of these invasions by Pul and Tiglath-pileser, or Tilgath-pilneser, Kings of Assyria, it is said, imply that the deportation was complete; and after the carrying away of the people by Shalmaneser, it seems hardly possible that any Hebrews could have been left.[4]

I am not disposed, however, to adopt this extreme view, and thus to deny all claim of the later Samaritans, at least, to a Hebrew origin or affinity. They themselves insist upon the right to it as early as the Babylonian Captivity, if not before, and have never ceased to reaffirm it in every possible way. True, Ezra and Nehemiah refused to allow them to share in the erection of the Temple in Jerusalem;

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[1] Exod. xii. 8, 11. [2] Exod. xii. 10. [3] Domestic Life in Palestine, p. 250–252.

[4] 2 Kings xv. 29; 1 Chron. v. 26; 2 Kings xviii. 9, 10.

but this does not prove that there was not a large Hebrew element in their national composition, since other reasons than that of blood relationship may have led to their rejection.

Before the captivity of the Ten Tribes, the alienation and hatred between Jew and Samaritan was fully developed both by their political rebellion and their idolatrous apostasy, and it is not likely that the character, religious and moral, of the Samaritans had improved during the exile of the Jews in Babylon. They had, no doubt, continued that mongrel form of worship, fearing the Lord and serving their own gods, while the Jews had become more intense haters of idols and idol-worship than ever before.[1] Therefore they were utterly opposed to any social or religious fellowship with the Samaritans. Yet, notwithstanding this total estrangement and bitter animosity between them, the people of Samaria held fast to, and gloried in their Patriarchal ancestry. "Art thou greater than our father Jacob?" said the woman at the well to Jesus; and this assumed ancestry no doubt represented the universal tradition of the nation; nor was it rebuked or denied by our Lord; and in a broad, yet legitimate sense, I think their claim may be established by the following considerations:

By modifying the comprehensive terms in which the Assyrian deportations are recorded. Such accounts are rarely, if ever, to be taken in their absolute literal sense. It is evident that no such utter extinction of the native population was accomplished, either by Joshua, or by the Babylonian monarchs, or even by the Romans at the destruction of Jerusalem; for we find, in every case, the original inhabitants still clinging in considerable numbers to their former homes.

At the present day, when war desolates any part of this country, multitudes of the people escape to the neighboring cities along the coast and elsewhere, and as soon as the calamity subsides they return to their former possessions; and I believe it was thus during and after the invasions of the Assyrians. Those who had taken refuge in Sidon, Tyre, Acre, Judea, and other parts soon found their way back when the invaders had retired. These returned natives mingled, no doubt, with the foreign colonists, and thus a heterogeneous community grew up by degrees. The foreign element, however, naturally decreased by families returning to their old homes, and from other causes; while the native Hebrew race, re-enforced by constant accessions from the surrounding districts, would finally assimilate to itself the entire population. Of course this implies a mongrel race at first, and a hybrid religion; but the dominant elements would ultimately be Hebraistic, and what was alien must have gradually died out and disappeared.

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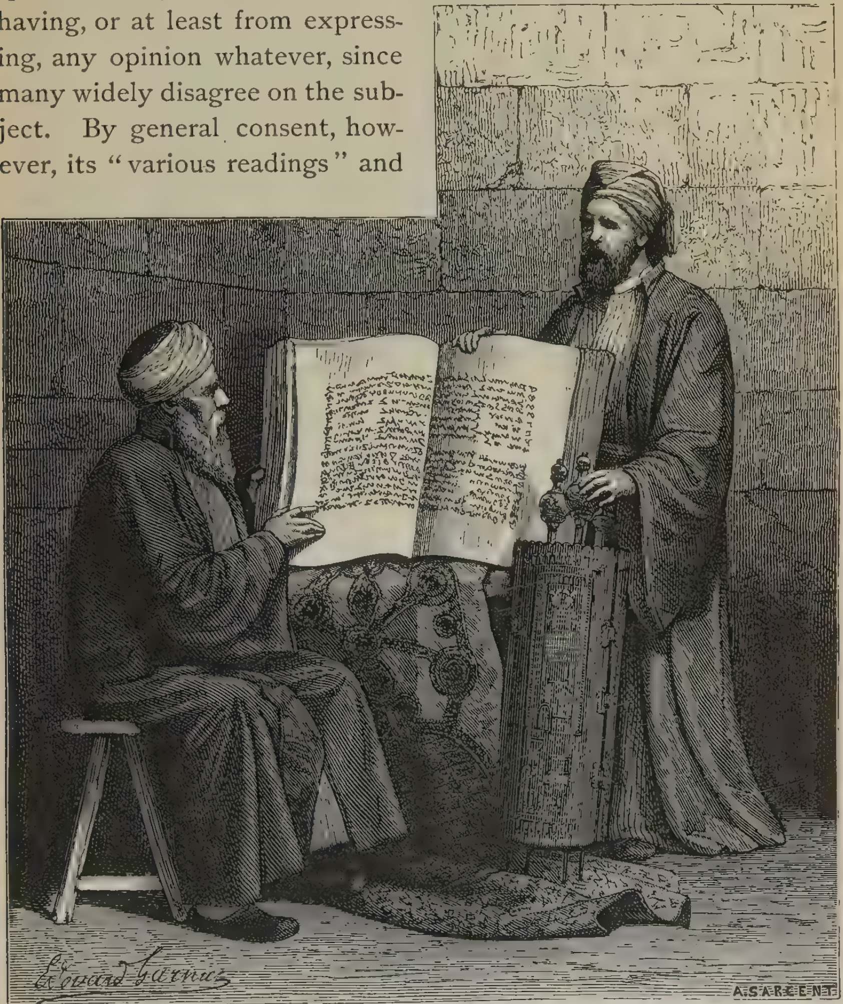
[1] 2 Kings xvii. 33.

However this question may be settled, all will admit that the history of this people is surprising and unique. Down to the first century of our era, at least, they were numerous and powerful. Many of them were converted to Christianity, and were probably incorporated with the primitive Church in Judea. But, by a marvellous combination of external oppression and internal decay, they have dwindled down to the one hundred and fifty souls, all told, that constitute the little community known as the Samaritans here in Nâblus; and the question naturally arises, has it touched bottom, or will it sink into the sea of utter oblivion? The latter result, sad as it is, seems the more probable. Two hundred years ago there were small communities like this one in Cairo, Gaza, and Damascus; but for the last half century Samaritans have been found only in this city of Nâblus.

The Samaritans and their history had long been forgotten, when, early in the seventeenth century, they became invested with extraordinary interest and importance in the estimation of the literati of Europe. This was entirely owing to the discovery of their copy of the Pentateuch, which was found to vary in many particulars from that of the Jews. Hence arose a controversy of extreme violence in regard to the relative authority of the two versions. Copies of the Samaritan Pentateuch were sought for with avidity, and procured at great expense. But the contest has long since subsided, leaving countless volumes of literary lumber to gather dust on the unexplored bookshelves of interested scholars. Though that discussion was singularly barren in valuable results, it has been a Godsend to this feeble community of Samaritans in Nâblus. It secured them many powerful friends and patrons, ever ready to defend them in time of danger, and aid them in seasons of distress.

As to the critical value of their roll or volume of the Law, which we, in common with other travellers, have had the satisfaction to inspect, we may be excused from having, or at least from expressing, any opinion whatever, since many widely disagree on the subject. By general consent, however, its "various readings" and departures from, and contradictions of the Hebrew text, have ceased to disturb the faith of the Christian world. As part of the "apparatus criticus" of the commentator and the Biblical student it has its place, and may be consulted occasionally with advantage. There



SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH.

is an elaborate article on the subject in Smith's Bible Dictionary, and in Dr. Robinson's Researches an able resumé of the history of the Samaritans will be found.

The sacred roll itself is written on yellowish brown parchment, much discolored by long use, at least that portion of it unrolled to view. In some places it is patched, and in others sadly needs mending. What may be the length of it, I do not know; but it is about fifteen inches wide, and the rods upon which it is rolled project on each side, so as to avoid injury to the parchment when opening and closing the roll. The silver case in which it is kept is adorned with engraved figures and scenes said to represent the ground-plan of the tabernacle, and the roll itself is wrapped up in an embroidered scarf of crimson satin, which is removed with great reverence when the roll is about to be shown to visitors. There is a curious discrepancy in the descriptions which different travellers give of the calligraphy of this roll. One says it is exquisitely beautiful; another, that it is irregular and clumsy. The characters are, of course, what are called Samaritan; but the assertion that it was written by Abishua, the son of Phinehas, more than three thousand years ago, is simply preposterous.

Let us turn our attention to Nâblus, where we are now encamped, for it has a longer history than Samaria, and a probable future much more promising.

If it occupies the place of Shechem, it is one of the oldest cities in the world.

There is nothing improbable in that, for its natural advantages and abundant supply of water mark out the site as that for an important city. We can commence with the history of Samaria from "the beginning," but not so that of Shechem. It was amongst the first cities mentioned in Biblical history, and dates back to a period before antiquity began, and is too old for ruins. It was known also as Sichem in Genesis, and this form of the name is repeated in Acts, where it is rendered Sychem; but whether it was afterwards called Shechem from the son of Hamor, although extremely probable, must remain uncertain.[1]

We have no means of knowing what sort of a "place" it was

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[1] Gen. xii. 6; Acts vii. 16.

NÂBLUS—SHECHEM.

when "Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain [or oak] of Moreh," when he "went forth from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan." When his grandson "Jacob came from Padan-aram and pitched his tent before the city," with his large family and numerous household, it had walls and gates.[1] Apparently, however, it was then only an inconsiderable town, since the sons of Jacob, Simeon, and Levi afterwards "spoiled" it, and massacred the male inhabitants, in revenge for the indignity offered to the family in the matter of Dinah; a barbarous tragedy which Jacob long afterwards remembered and bitterly cursed.[2] No doubt it soon recovered from that calamity, for it was well known in the time of Moses and Joshua.

It is a curious fact that the oak, not plain, of Moreh, where Abraham pitched his tent, reappears in the narrative of Jacob's residence here, for Jacob "hid all the strange gods" that were in his family "under the oak which was by Shechem," and apparently again in Joshua, where it is said that "Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God, and took a great stone, and set it up there under an oak that was by the sanctuary of the Lord."[3]

That was a part of the ceremony at the grand convocation of the tribes of Israel at Shechem, after the conquest of the land of Canaan, when the covenant to be the Lord's people was solemnly ratified by the nation.

What on the face of it appears to have been an earlier assemblage of all Israel at Shechem is recorded in the eighth chapter of Joshua, as occurring immediately after the destruction of Ai. No doubt the convocation itself actually took place some time, but it is certainly passing strange that it should have occurred at that time, since the whole country was then still in the possession of their enemies. The general opinion of critics, I believe, is that this passage has in some way been misplaced. It would come more naturally in connection with the gathering of "all the tribes of Israel to Shechem" by Joshua, there to receive his last commands.[4] But however the question of time may be decided, the place cannot be mistaken, and it imparts a special interest to this valley of Nâblus.

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[1] Gen. xxxiv. 20.

[2] Gen. xxxiv.; xlix. 5, 7.

[3] Gen. xxxv. 1-4; Josh. xxiv. 26; Judges ix. 6.

[4] Josh. xxiv.

By some convulsion of nature, the central range of mountains running north and south was cleft open to its base at right angles to its own line of extension, and the deep fissure thus made is the vale of Nâblus, as it appears to one coming up the plain of el Mŭkhna from Jerusalem. The valley is at least eighteen hundred feet above the level of the sea, and the mountains on either hand tower to an elevation of about one thousand feet more. Mount Ebal is on the north, Gerizim on the south, and the city between. Near the eastern end the vale is not more than sixty rods wide; and there, I suppose, the tribes assembled to hear the "blessings and cursings" read by the Levites. We have them in extenso in the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth chapters of Deuteronomy; and in Joshua we are informed when and how that unique ceremony was performed.[1] "Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin," stood on Gerizim; and "Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulon, Dan, and Naphtali," on Ebal;[2] while "all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark and on that side before the priests the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord;" the whole nation of Israel was there. And Joshua "read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones."[3]

That was the most august assembly of the kind the sun ever shone upon; and I never stand in that narrow plain, with Ebal and Gerizim rising on either hand to the sky, without involuntarily recalling the scene. I have shouted to hear the responsive echo, and fancied how impressive it must have been when the loud-voiced Levites proclaimed from the cliffs of Ebal, "Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image, an abomination unto the Lord."[4] And then the tremendous "AMEN!" tenfold louder, from the mighty congregation, rising and swelling, and re-echoing from Ebal to Gerizim, and from Gerizim to Ebal.

Certainly there never was an assembly to compare with that. It was part of the command of the Lord, and of Moses to Joshua, that, having placed the "blessings and cursings" on Gerizim and on Ebal, he should "write this law upon great stones" which he should rear up there. Do you suppose that the whole of it was graven upon stone?

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[1] Josh. viii.

[2] Deut. xxvii. 12, 13.

[3] Josh. viii. 33–35.

[4] Deut. xxvii. 15.

A careful examination of Deuteronomy xxvii. 2–8, and Joshua viii. 30–32, will lead to the opinion that the law, or a portion of it, was written upon or in the plaster with which those "great stones" were coated. This could easily have been done, and it was common in ancient times. I have seen such writing certainly more than two thousand years old, and still as distinct as when first inscribed on the plaster.

There seems to have been an unnecessary amount of learning bestowed upon that subject, and difficulties imagined where none exist.

Michaëlis, in his Commentary on the Laws of Moses, enters into a labored examination of the passages referred to.[1] He refutes various explanations, amongst others that of Kennicott, who supposes that the letters were cut out in black marble, the letters being raised, and the hollow intervals between them filled with white lime plaster. His own opinion, however, is that Moses commanded Joshua to do as Sostratus, the architect of the Pharos, did, who cut his own name on the solid marble, then plastered it over, and wrote the name of the King of Egypt on the cement. Moses, in like manner, ordered the law to be cut in the solid stone, and then to be plastered over with hard cement, so that when this plaster fell off, in after-ages, the engraven law would be discovered entire and perfectly legible! Now the main objection to these speculations is that there is not the slightest foundation for them in the text. The direction there is perfectly plain, and needs none of these recondite devices to render it intelligible and reasonable. The Egyptians were accustomed to engrave on stone in various ways, and Moses must have been familiar with that process, but he was also familiar with the mode which he here commands to be followed, and knew it to be sufficiently durable for all practical purposes. He therefore did not order such an herculean labor as to grave the whole law in marble, but simply to write it on or in properly prepared stucco.

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[1] Michaëlis, vol. i. book iii.

In this hot climate, where there is no frost to dissolve the cement, it will continue hard and unbroken for thousands of years, which is certainly long enough. That on Solomon's pools remains in admirable preservation, though exposed to all the vicissitudes of the climate, and with no protection. The cement in the tombs about Sidon is still perfect, and the writing on them entire, though acted upon by the moist, damp air always found in caverns, for perhaps two thousand years. What Joshua did, therefore, when he erected those great stones at Mount Ebal, was merely to write in the still soft cement with a stile, or, more likely, on the polished surface, when dry, with ink or paint, as seen in ancient tombs. Properly sheltered, and not broken off by violence, the cement would have remained to this day. But everything that could be destroyed has long since been again and again overthrown, in the countless convulsions of this most rebellious neighborhood; and the hope expressed by Michaëlis that those marble slabs, with the law engraven upon them, were still in existence, buried beneath the rubbish of Nâblus, and might one day be discovered, crumbles into dust. Nor need we mourn over the loss. The printing-press preserves this same law to us far more securely than could any monument, even of solid adamant or burnished bronze.

At Shechem the bones of Joseph were buried, as we shall have occasion to remember when visiting his tomb. After the Conquest, Shechem belonged to Ephraim, and was given to the Levites "to be a city of refuge for the slayer."[1] Abimelech, the treacherous and bloody son of Gideon, made it his capital after the death of his father, as we read in the ninth chapter of Judges. "And when they told it to Jotham, he went and stood in the top of Mount Gerizim, and lifted up his voice," rebuking the Shechemites, in the words of his beautiful parable, and foretelling their ruin, and then he "ran away, and fled."

Several lofty precipices of Gerizim literally overhang the city, any one of which would answer his purpose. Nor would it be difficult to be heard, as everybody knows who has listened to the public crier in villages on Lebanon. In the stillness of evening, after the people have returned home from their distant fields, he ascends the mountain-side above the place, or to the roof of some prominent house, and there "lifts up his voice and cries," as Jotham did; and he gives forth his proclamation with such distinctness that all can hear and understand. Indeed, the people in these mountainous countries are able, from long practice, so to pitch their voices as to be heard distinctly at distances almost incredible. They talk with persons across deep wadys, and give directions which are perfectly understood; and in doing this they seem to speak very little louder than their usual tone of conversation. Jotham, therefore, might easily be heard by the greater part of the inhabitants of Shechem.[1]

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[1] Josh. xx. 7; xxi. 21.

It is pleasant to see around us, and blending with the diversified foliage of the valley beyond, "the olive, the fig, the vine, and the bramble," apparently as capable to-day to assume their part in a parable, or give point to a rebuke, as they were in the time of Jotham.

The people of Shechem, incited by Gaal, the son of Ebed, soon rebelled against Abimelech; and he, having captured the city, "slew the people that was therein, and beat down the city, and sowed it with salt."

"Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel were come to make him king," and there "Israel rebelled against the house of David," and "they sent and called Jeroboam unto the congregation, and made him king."[2] In ways somewhat similar, the one to the other, has this unquiet and rebellious city been destroyed, beaten down, and built up again, from the time of Jacob and his sons to the present feeble rule of the Sultân and his Pashas.

Nâblus, the modern name, is merely the Arabic for Neapolis, or New City, which was given to it by Vespasian, possibly because it had been, at least partially, rebuilt by his command. This name, like that of Sebŭstieh, given to Samaria by Herod, has entirely superseded that of Shechem, a very unusual thing in such cases. The reason for the tenacity of the new names may probably be found in the fact that the inhabitants settled in these cities were mainly of foreign origin.

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[1] Judges ix. 7–21.

[2] 1 Kings xii. 1, 19, 20.

V.

NÂBLUS TO ZER'ÎN.

Nâblus, the Modern Town.—Description of the Streets by Miss Rogers.—Absence of Ancient Remains.—Soap Factories.—Commerce and Population of Nâblus.—Number of Samaritans.—Future of Nâblus.—Barracks at 'Ain Defneh.—The Gold Cave.—'Askar, Sychar.—" The Woman of Samaria."—Lieutenant Conder on the Site of Sychar.—Joseph's Tomb.—Jacob's Well.—Captain Anderson's Description of the Well.—Depth of the Well.—Belâta.—The Well Dug by Jacob.—Ancient Church over the Well.—Identification of the Well.—Jesus at Jacob's Well.—The Season when he Rested there.—Nâblus to Jezreel.—Ebal and Gerizim contrasted.—" The Cursing" pronounced on Ebal.—El Kenîseh.—Outlook from the Top of Ebal.—Shalem.—Enon.—Tŭllûza, Tirzah.—Wady Fâri'a to ed Dâmieh.—The Jordan twenty-five hundred Feet below Nâblus.—Flight of Benhadad's Army from Samaria.—Expedition of the Israelites against Ramoth-gilead.—Troops crossing the Jordan.—Width of the Ghôr at the Dâmieh Ford.—Banks and Bluffs of the Jordan Valley.—" The Swelling of Jordan."—Valley of the Jordan deserted.—Arid Nature of the Ghôr from Dâmieh to Jericho.—Description of Jericho and "the Great Plain" by Josephus.—Healing of the Waters by Elisha.—The Palm and the Balsam in the Plain of Jericho.—John baptizing in the Wilderness of Judea.—The Jordan not Visible from the Upper Ghôr.—Lieutenant Conder's Identification of the Altar of Ed.—Ed Dâmieh, "the City Adam."—Van de Velde.—Adam and Zarthan.—Roman Bridge at ed Dâmieh.—Parable of the Mustard-seed.—Probable Site of Succoth.—Fords of the Jordan.—Jisr el Mejâmi'a.—Tûbâs, Thebez.—Death of Abimelech.—Jeb'a, Geba.—The District of Samaria Fruitful and Populous.—Sânûr, Bethulieh.—Sânûr besieged by Abd Allah Pasha.—The Drowned Meadow.—Jerba.—Kŭbâtîyeh.—Plain of Esdraelon.—Beit 'Abd el Hady and Beit Jerrâr.—Turbulent District.—Civil War in er Rôhâh, and on Lebanon.—Tell Dothân, Dothan.—Description of the Tell, the Cisterns and Pits.—Joseph at Shechem and Dothan.—Cruelty of Joseph's Brethren.—Balm of Gilead.—Elisha at Dothan and Samaria.—Haunted Trees.—Wady Bel'amy.—Jenîn, En-gannim.—Distant Source of the Kishon.—Biblical References to En-gannim.—Jenîn to Zer'în.—Kefr Kûd, Caporcotia.—Jelbôn, Gilboa.—Death of Saul and Jonathan.—Dew and Rain on Gilboa.—Burdens of Prophecy.—Esdraelon.—Zer'în, Jezreel.

May 9th. Evening.

THIS morning I spent wandering through the streets and markets of Nâblus. The houses of the city are solidly built of stone, having the same sort of courts, gates, doors, windows, and roofs as those at Jerusalem.

It is a queer old place, this modern Shechem; the streets are narrow, crooked, dirty, and dark, and in many places arched or vaulted over, and the pavement is even worse than that of the Holy City. In winter it is difficult, if not dangerous, to pass along them, owing to the rush of water from the fountains and streams, which at that season of the year are full and overflowing; it surges over the pavement with a deafening roar. In this respect, I remember no place with which to compare Nâblus except Brusa; and, like that city, it has the mulberry, the orange, the pomegranate, and other trees growing amongst the houses, and wreathed and festooned with rose-bushes and grape-vines, the fragrance of whose blossoms loads the air with delicious perfume during the months of April and May. There the bulbul delights to sing, and hundreds of other birds unite to swell the chorus. The people of Nâblus maintain that theirs is the most musical valley in Palestine, nor am I disposed to contradict them.

Miss Rogers, herself a resident of this country for some years, gives the best description I have read of the streets, bazaars, and "arcades" of Nâblus. She writes:

"The shops were well stocked, and busy with buyers and sellers. There were small arcades especially devoted to the sale of tobacco —others were filled with the refreshing odor of lemons, oranges, and citrons. The bazaars for vegetables and prepared food were rather difficult to pass through. They were thronged with Turkish soldiers from the pasha's camp, who were seeking their mid-day rations. Some of them were carrying large metal dishes, containing a medley of chopped vegetables; or deep earthen-ware plates, filled with pease-pudding, garnished with slices of lemon floating in oil. Others hurried through the crowd with bowls of steaming soup before them, which very effectually cleared the way. There seemed to be no friendly feeling between the soldiers and the towns-people. Angry voices and loud cries surrounded us, and in several cases blows were exchanged before a bargain was settled.

"The long, narrow bazaar, where dried fruits, olives, rice, butter, and cheese are sold, led us to the entrance of an important mosk, the exterior of which is rich in relics of Christian art of the twelfth century. After pausing before it for a few minutes, we made our way down a street almost blocked up by camels, and thence passed into the principal bazaar, the finest arcade in Palestine. Here European goods are displayed, such as Manchester prints, Sheffield cutlery, beads, and French bijouterie, very small mirrors, Bohemian glass bottles for nargîlehs, Swiss head-kerchiefs, in imitation of the Constantinople mundîls, crockery-ware, and china coffee-cups. But the brightest shops are those in which Damascus and Aleppo silks, and embroidered jackets and tarbûshes from Stamboul, appear, with stores of Turkish pipes, amber rosaries, and bracelets from Hebron. On the low shop-counters the turbaned salesmen squat in the midst of the gay wares, and they smoke and gossip, stroke their beards, and finger their rosaries from early in the morning until sunset.

"An opening in the middle of this arcade led us into an extensive khân, well planned, but so out of repair as to be almost useless. It is an uncovered square space, enclosed by a two-storied range of buildings. The ground-floor is well adapted for lodging camels and other beasts of burden, but the upper chambers are so dilapidated that they afford but little shelter. We mounted a broken stone stairway, and with difficulty reached the terraced roof, which commands a good view of the town."[1]

I was surprised at the absence of all visible remains of antiquity to confirm or illustrate the history of the place.

However accounted for, it is certainly remarkable that there are no ruins even of Roman edifices. The only public buildings that attract attention are the five mosks, two of which were originally Christian churches, but none of them older than the times of the Crusades. Outside of the walls are great heaps, or rather hills, of ashes from the soap factories.

The manufacture of soap appears to be the chief industry of Nâblus.

There are at least twenty of those factories, so called, and this number is accounted for by the fact that the surrounding country abounds in olive-orchards, which furnish more oil than is needed for ordinary use, and the ordinary disposition of this surplus oil is to convert it into soap. The people of Nâblus carry on considerable trade with the seaport towns from Jaffa to Beirût, and with the Arabs east of the Jordan, not only in soap, but also in grain, wool, sheep, and oxen. During the civil war in America, cotton was grown largely here, as elsewhere in this country, and was taken to Damascus to supply the numerous looms which were then busy in that city manufacturing cotton fabrics for native consumption.

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[1] Domestic Life in Palestine, p. 260, 261.

The population has not greatly increased during the last half century. It was estimated at about ten thousand, and it does not now exceed thirteen thousand. By far the largest proportion of the inhabitants are Moslems, extremely fanatical, insolent, and turbulent. The Christians of all sects number about seven hundred, mostly of the Orthodox Greek Church. The one hundred and fifty Samaritans reside near their small Kenîseh, or synagogue, in the south-western corner of the town; and there are also a few Jews, who follow the usual avocations of that omnipresent race in every Oriental city.

When railways and other modern improvements and institutions shall have been introduced into Palestine, this city, from its natural position, abundance of water, great fertility of the surrounding country, and temperate climate, will become not only a favorite resort, but the centre of a large and productive district.

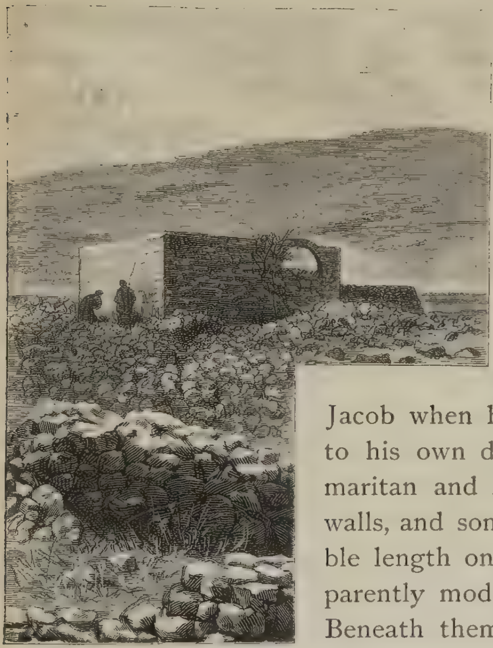
As we are to resume our travels to-morrow, I visited in the afternoon 'Ain 'Askar, Joseph's Tomb, Jacob's Well, and other places of interest at the eastern end of the valley. We remained some time at the fine fountain of 'Ain Defneh, where the Turkish Government has recently erected very commodious barracks, connecting them with the city by a well-made road; there we lunched and rested. Proceeding on our way, the guide led me to the foot of Ebal to see some rock-cut tombs which he regarded as very remarkable. They were, however, merely of the ordinary kind, to be found anywhere in this country. One of the largest is called Mughâret ed Dahab, the gold cave, but for what reason, unless connected with the belief in hid treasure, I could not ascertain. Keeping along the base of Ebal, we came in about twenty minutes to 'Ain 'Askar, where there is a fountain, a dilapidated sheikh's tomb, and a few remains of buildings, which, as you suppose, mark the site of the Sychar to which the disciples went "to buy meat," leaving Jesus, "weary with his journey," sitting alone "on Jacob's well."

If Nâblus, with its never-failing fountains, occupies the site of Shechem, it would seem to prove that Shechem was not the Sychar mentioned in the fourth chapter of John, for it is incredible that "the woman of Samaria" would have gone miles away from those delicious fountains "to draw water" out of a very deep well. Again, if we admit the identity of the present well of Jacob with that mentioned by John, there can be but little doubt that Sychar was a small Samaritan town not far from that spot; and there, to the north-east of it, is the village now called 'Askar. This is so like John's Sychar that I feel inclined to adopt it, notwithstanding the stubborn guttural 'ain at the beginning of the modern Arabic name. Similar changes, though rare, are not unknown, as, for example, in the name of a city so celebrated as Askelon, 'Askulân, where the Hebrew aleph is replaced by the Arabic 'ain. Of course, "the woman of Samaria" belonged to the country or people of Samaria, not to the city of that name, which is some eight miles to the north-west of the well, for we read in the thirty-ninth verse of the same chapter, "and many of the Samaritans of that city [Sychar] believed on him."

After quoting the Biblical text in John—"Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there"—Lieutenant Conder adds: "This description is most applicable to 'Askar. The well of Jacob is situate at the point where the narrow vale of Shechem begins to broaden into the great plain [el Mŭkhna]. Immediately west lies the village of Belâta, with its fine spring and gardens. Little more than a third of a mile north-east is the tomb of Joseph, and from this a path gradually ascending leads to the village of 'Askar, which is visible from Jacob's well."

Leaving 'Ain 'Askar, we descended for about half a mile across the plain or valley towards the south-west, and about midway between Ebal and Gerizim we came to Joseph's Tomb, or Kabr Yûsuf. It is within a rude enclosure, about twenty feet square and twelve high, without roof or any architectural adornment. The interior is divided into two sections, and the tomb is in the one farthest south. It is covered with the ordinary lime plaster and whitewashed, and is about six feet long and four feet high.

It resembles the common Moslem graves of the country, and, being exposed to the heat of summer and the rain in winter, it has no pall or votive offering of any kind, nor any marks of respect such as are seen at the sepulchres of the most insignificant Moslem saints. Yet that tomb is held in reverence by Jew and Samaritan, Christian and Moslem; and, doubtless, it marks the spot where the children of Israel buried the bones of Joseph, "in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for a hundred pieces of silver; and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph."[1]


KABR YÛSUF—JOSEPH'S TOMB.

Within the entrance to the enclosure is a vine "whose branches run over the wall," touchingly recalling the very words of Jacob when he blessed Joseph, previous to his own death.[2] There are also Samaritan and Arabic inscriptions on the walls, and some in Hebrew of considerable length on the south wall, but all apparently modern, and of no importance. Beneath them is the ordinary niche to guide the Moslem in his prayers. I noticed at each end of the tomb a square pillar of plastered mason-work, with a bowl-like hollow at the top.

They are made for various purposes, as the burning of incense, and possibly garments by fanatical Jews, as is done at Meirôn, west of Safed. The niches in the walls are for small lamps, which are lighted on certain festival occasions. The entire building is fast crumbling to ruin, presenting a most melancholy spectacle. Joseph, when about to die in Egypt, gave strict commandment concerning his bones. He even "took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence."[1] Alas! was it to obtain such a forlorn sepulchre as that near the foot of Ebal, that his descendants carried the embalmed body of one of the noblest characters within the range of human history for forty years through the Wilderness of Wandering?

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[1] Josh. xxiv. 32.

[2] Gen. xlix. 22.

About half a mile southward from Joseph's Tomb, at the base of Gerizim, on a low mound just below the road, my guide stopped at the corner of a dilapidated wall, exclaiming, "Haida bîr Y'akûb"—this is Jacob's Well! I could see nothing like a well—nothing but a low, modern wall much broken down, and never, apparently, more than ten feet high. The area enclosed by it is fifty-six paces from east to west, and sixty-five from north to south. The surface is covered by a confused mass of shapeless rubbish, overgrown with weeds and nettles. There are two or three columns still standing in the area, much broken up by the hammers of travellers. On the north of the area is an old mill, the interior of which shows remains of ancient work, and there are also other indications of antiquity about the locality. The well is near the south-eastern corner of the area, and, to reach the mouth of it, one must let himself down, with some risk, about ten feet into a low vault.

That vault, as also the well itself, are thus described by Captain Anderson, who descended into them in April, 1866: "In the midst of a mass of ruined stones is a vaulted chamber about fifteen feet square, and in the floor of the chamber are two openings four feet apart, one of which is the proper mouth of the well. The other opening is either an accidental breach, or has been designedly made in a rough-and-ready way for the convenience of having two mouths, by which pitchers could be lowered into the well simultaneously. The true mouth of the well has a narrow opening just wide enough to allow the body of a man to pass through with arms uplifted, and this narrow neck, which is about four feet long, opens into the well itself, which is cylindrically shaped, and about seven feet six inches in diameter. The mouth and upper part of the well is built of masonry, and the well appears to have been sunk through a mixture of alluvial soil and limestone fragments till a compact bed of mountain limestone was reached, having horizontal strata which could easily be worked; and the interior of the well presents the appearance of having been lined throughout with rough masonry."

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[1] Gen. l. 25.

There is a great discrepancy in the measurements of the well by different tourists, doubtless owing to the accumulation of the débris that has fallen into it "from the ruins of the buildings that formerly covered it, and passers-by have for centuries thrown stones into it." All confirm the saying of the Samaritan woman that "the well is deep." Maundrell, in 1697, makes the depth one hundred and five feet, with fifteen feet of water. Mr. Hebard and Mr. Holmes agree in their measurements with Maundrell, except that there was then no water. That was in May, 1838; while Mr. Calhoun, in April of the next year, found nearly the same depth of water that Maundrell mentions. Dr. Wilson, in 1841, when he recovered the Bible of the Rev. Andrew Bonar from the bottom of the well, where it had lain for several years, found the depth only seventy-five feet. It has since been measured by Captain Anderson in 1866, and again by Lieutenant Conder in 1875, and both agree with Dr. Wilson. The former suggests that "the well was sunk to a great depth for the purpose of securing, even in exceptionally dry seasons, a supply of water, which would always be filtering through the sides of the well, and would collect at the bottom."

A short distance west of Jacob's Well is a small village, called Belâta, having a fine fountain, which appears to rise under an old mosk. The water of that fountain irrigates the plain quite to the well itself; and if it existed at the time of Jacob, it is difficult to understand why the well was dug at all.

The fountain of Belâta may have been produced by earthquakes which convulsed this country during the sixth century, and perhaps the same phenomena so cracked the rock strata as to render the well itself incapable of holding water. The stubborn facts are that the well is actually there, and must have been dug by some one, notwithstanding the abundant supply of fountains in the neighborhood—and why not by Jacob? He was as likely to need it as any one, and as competent to execute the work. We may suppose that the fountains within the valley of Shechem were so appropriated as not to be available for Jacob's large family and larger flocks. Even now the inhabitants would not allow the flocks and herds of such an opulent tent-dwelling tribe to frequent their pretty vale.

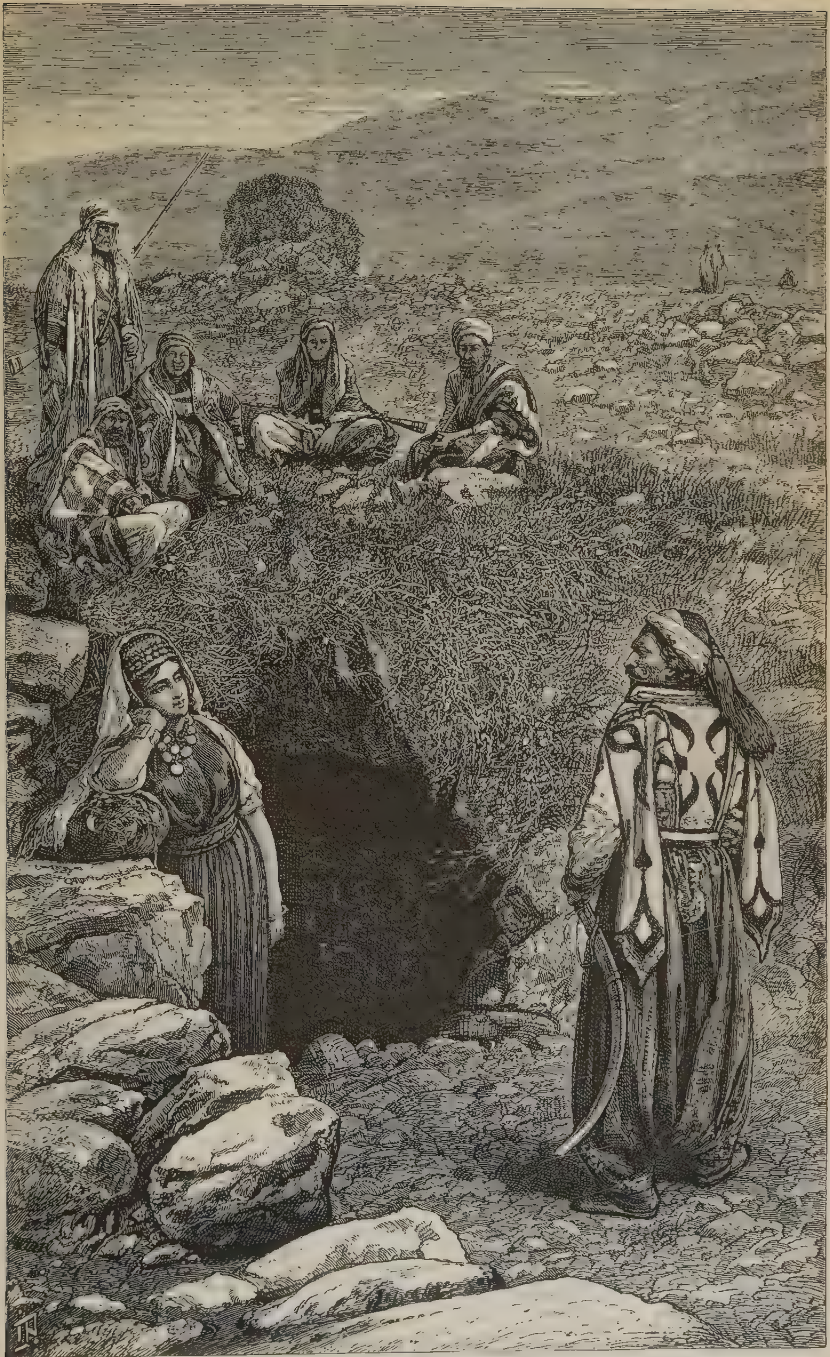
All travellers notice the foundations of an ancient building near the well, mostly on the north side, doubtless the remains of the church erected about the fourth century, and mentioned by Jerome as having been built around the well of Jacob. Arculphus, in the seventh century, describes the church as built in the form of a cross, with the well in the centre. It was destroyed before the time of the Crusades. Captain Anderson refers to the Church of "St. Jerome at Abu Ghâush, where excavations have disclosed a crypt, forming a complete subterranean church, which contains a cistern filled with water." And Lieutenant Conder, in 1875, says: "At Nâblus we found that nearly the whole of the floor and foundations of the early church built over Jacob's Well exist, hidden by modern vaults."

The tradition regarding the well and the church is older than the time of Eusebius and Jerome, and is amongst the few circumstantial evidences which go to prove that this is the very well from which "our father Jacob drank himself, and his children, and his cattle."[1] I see no reason, therefore, to question the identity of the site.

Again, if we locate Sychar at 'Ain 'Askar, we have the three places which enhance the interest in this vicinity—"a city of Samaria, called Sychar," Joseph's tomb, and "Jacob's well"—in positions which correspond to the Biblical notices. Still, it is truly amongst the strangest incidents in all history that sites like Jacob's Well, where our blessed Redeemer held that marvellous conversation with the woman of Samaria, should be so sadly neglected.[2] It is the only precise spot on the earth which we may be sure was hallowed by his sacred presence, and rendered memorable forever by his divine teaching; and yet it is encumbered with rubbish, and overgrown with weeds and nettles!

Some harmonists and commentators place the visit of our Lord to Sychar in December, and others in the spring-time. They make, also, the question, "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh harvest?" an important note of time in the history of our Lord's public ministry.[3]

[1] John iv. 12. [2] John iv. 1–43. [3] John iv. 35.



BÎR ES SÂMAIRÎYEH—JACOB'S WELL.

I find it difficult to accept their theories. "Jesus, being wearied with his journey" along the same road which then as now led from "Judea into Galilee," turned aside, and "sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour," that is, high noon, and in the very heat of the day. This suggests the summer-time or autumn, when travelling in this country, especially on foot, is very fatiguing. He was thirsty; that was quite natural, if the time was autumn. Not a drop of water could I find, at that season, along that same road for miles. But in stormy December the case is far different. I have passed through that region in winter, and the main difficulty encountered then was from too much water. Again, "there cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water" from that deep well: not an unnatural proceeding if the season was summer or autumn, but not during December. In winter such a well is no place to sit on and engage in conversation.

Dean Alford, commenting on the question, "Say not ye," etc., regards it as a proverbial expression. "Are not ye accustomed to say, There are four months, and *then* cometh harvest?" The little word *then* is not in the original, and I am inclined to accept his rendering. The proverbial expression may have arisen from the fact that in their neighborhood there was only about four months from the time when sowing finished until the harvest began. The Dean further asserts that no reliance can be placed upon this passage to determine any date in our Lord's ministry.

May 10th.

We are to overtake our baggage at Jenîn. The muleteers take the ordinary and easier road around the western end of Mount Ebal by Jeb'a and Sânûr, but we will ascend Ebal, not merely to climb that rugged rival of Gerizim, but also to survey the extensive panorama visible from its summit. The natives call Ebal, Jebel Sitty es Salamîyeh, or Jebel 'Amûd ed Dîn, the mountain of my lady of peace, or the pillar of religion, according as one may happen to be near the dilapidated tomb of either of those Moslem saints, at the eastern or western end of the mountain.

We did well to start early, thus accomplishing this fatiguing ascent in the cool of the morning.

It is, in fact, a hard climb of about twelve hundred feet from the plain. Ebal is three thousand and seventy-nine feet above the sea-level, and more than two hundred and thirty feet higher than Gerizim.

The contrast between this rocky and barren surface of Ebal and the luxuriant terraces of Gerizim gives some plausibility to the old superstition that the whole mount had been blasted by "the curses" pronounced from its heights at the time of the convocation of the tribes of Israel, in the days of Joshua.

Even if true, that could only have applied to the south-eastern end of it. In other parts it is as productive as its rival; while on the northern and eastern declivities there are large tracts well watered, and of great beauty and fertility.

Its productive capacity here, however, appears exhausted in raising a heavy crop of cactus, or prickly pear. We have seen nothing resembling it except, perhaps, the garden hedges about Ramleh.

Nor is there anything like it elsewhere in the country. The fruit of the prickly pear in many parts of Palestine is a very important crop, as we shall see in our future travels. We must now incline to the right in order to reach the highest part of the mountain, near to which is a singular ruin called Khŭrbet el Kenîseh, ruin of the church. Major Wilson says of it: "It consists of an enclosure ninety-two feet square, with walls twenty feet thick, built of selected unhewn stones, without mortar. In the thickness of the walls are the remains of several chambers, each about ten feet square, and at two opposite ends there is a projection of four feet, as if for defensive purposes. There is a cistern within the building, and round it are several heaps of stones and ruins. Excavations were made, but without results. It is not easy to form an opinion on the object of this building: it is too small for a fortified camp, and, though the chambers are somewhat similar to those in the fortified churches, the interior space, fifty feet square, is too restricted to have held a church." The only other indications of antiquity on Mount Ebal are the usual rock-cut tombs and cisterns.

Here we are at last upon the summit, and the prospect, in all directions, is indeed vast and wonderfully varied, and we see it to great advantage through the transparent atmosphere of this brilliant morning.

Being considerably higher than Gerizim, the range of vision is much more extensive, and reaches to many parts not visible from the top of that mountain. It includes not only the entire province of Samaria, from the shores of the Mediterranean on the west to the Jordan valley on the east; and from Esdraelon northward to the border of Judah, and far beyond it towards Jaffa and Jerusalem on the south; but also all of Galilee, upper and lower, to Jebel Jermŭk, west of Safed, and the mountains north of that to the range of goodly Lebanon; while beyond Jordan, eastward and northward, the whole land of Gilead and of Bashan, up to snow-capped Hermon, are distinctly seen.

There must be many places of Biblical interest in this immediate neighborhood. One always asks first about them, for they alone impart special significance to the scenes and scenery in this land.

There are visible from our stand-point a few sites of considerable importance. On the plain, to the south, is a village called Sâlim, which many identify with the "Shalem, a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan," to which Jacob came on his return from Padan-aram.[1] It can scarcely be the Salim near Enon, at which latter place John was baptizing, for there is no Enon in its vicinity; neither is there "much water there." A small place called 'Ainûn is several miles farther north, but it has no fountain at all, and in the summer the few inhabitants have to resort to the great fountains at the head of Wady Fâri'a. Both Enon and Salim, therefore, must be classed with Biblical sites not yet identified.

Some three miles north of Ebal is the village of Tŭllûza, seated upon a high hill, and surrounded by extensive olive-groves. Dr. Robinson identifies it with Tirzah the beautiful. The King of Tirzah is mentioned as having been smitten by Joshua, along with thirty others, "on this side Jordan."[2]

It must have been a celebrated place in the time of Solomon, and of proverbial beauty, for he thus alludes to it in his Song: "Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem."[3]

The Kings of Israel, for several generations, had their country residence there, as appears from their history in the Books of the

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[1] Gen. xxxiii. 18.

[2] Josh. xii. 24.

[3] Song vi. 4.

Kings.[1] There is nothing royal about Tŭllûza at present; but from its lofty position, at the head of Wady Fâri'a, it overlooks the whole of that great valley quite down to its junction with the Jordan, near the ford of Dâmieh.

What may be the distance to that celebrated ford, and what the character of the intervening country?

It is time we were prosecuting our long day's ride; but we can spend part of the weary hours between our present stand-point and Jenîn in describing Wady Fâri'a and the Dâmieh ford.

It would take seven hours' hard riding to go from Nâblus to the ford, and the descent is very great. You must remember that the Jordan is at that place some eight hundred feet below the level of the sea, and that Nâblus is about nineteen hundred feet above that level. The descent to the river is, therefore, more than twenty-five hundred feet. For the greater part of the way the stream in Wady Fâri'a passes through a varied and picturesque country, now crossing fertile vales on either side, and anon plunging down wild ravines into similar vales below, which abound in trees and bushes of many varieties, while the immediate banks of the merry little river are hidden beneath impenetrable thickets of waving cane, blooming oleander, thorny bushes, and jagged brambles. For the last eight or ten miles the wady gradually expands into a beautiful plain, having the abrupt peak of Kurn Sŭrtabeh to the south, and the rugged mountain range of el Makhrûd on the north. Where it opens out on to the upper plateau of the Ghôr, or Jordan valley, it is quite level, and several miles wide.

That plain, as I saw it early one morning in the month of May, was musical with the song of birds of many kinds—bulbuls and doves, the beautiful bee-eater and the crown lark, chirping field-sparrow and twitter finches—birds of every size and shape, and in their gayest plumage. That part of Wady Fâri'a is highly cultivated, being irrigated by the canals that bring water to the flour-mills. Many muleteers were there loading their animals with cucumbers and other vegetables for the market of Nâblus.

The road from Nâblus to Dâmieh has probably been the scene of more than one memorable Biblical incident. Down that long and dangerous descent, I suppose, the terrified army of Benhadad rushed from the siege of Samaria, "For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us. Wherefore, they arose and fled for their life." The King of Israel, informed by the lepers that the camp was deserted, sent out horsemen, "saying, Go and see. And they went after them unto Jordan: and lo, all the way was full of garments and vessels which the Syrians had cast away in their haste."[1]

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[1] 1 Kings xiv. 17; xv. 21, 33; xvi. 6–23; 2 Kings xv. 14, 16.

What an awful scene of confusion, uproar, and disaster does this reveal! They must have trod one upon another, in their desperate haste, and many were, doubtless, trampled to death, or otherwise killed, as happened to the Midianites in the valley of Jezreel in the time of Gideon.[2]

If the flight of the Syrian host from Samaria, down that valley of Fâri'a, was in the night, and I suppose it was, the demoralization must have been complete. We, with the morning light to aid us, got often hopelessly bewildered amongst the watered gardens, whose owners had obliterated all traces of the road by their watercourses, or stopped up the way with impassable hedges of thorny bushes. In many places the plain is covered with clumps of thorny sidr and the no less thorny nŭbk-tree, and woe to the wretches who were driven amongst them in that wild and tumultuous panic. No wonder that "all the way was full of garments and vessels, which the Syrians had cast away in their haste."

A few years before the Syrian catastrophe, this same route probably witnessed the pompous march of the combined army of Ahab and Jehoshaphat to attack Ramoth-gilead, and as this was always the great highway from Samaria and Shechem to Gilead, there is every reason to suppose that the expedition of the two kings crossed the Jordan at the Dâmieh ford. To this day the main roads from Central Palestine to es Salt, the modern representative of Ramoth-gilead, there converge, and that now deserted shore often presents a crowded and noisy scene. I was once there when large caravans

[1] 2 Kings vii. 3–17.

[2] Judges vii. 22.

of donkeys and mules from Jerusalem, Nâblus, and elsewhere were waiting to be ferried across, en route to es Salt to buy wheat; and the day before the Pasha of Nâblus and Governor of the Belka, with his cortege and troops, had monopolized the ferry for several hours.

After riding for about two hours up the beautiful valley of Fâri'a on that May morning, we turned out of it to the left into a dry ravine called Wady ez Zeit. This soon narrowed into a rocky gorge, with perpendicular cliffs on either side, leaving scarcely room enough between for a loaded mule to pass. In the narrowest part of this defile we met a strolling band of gypsies leading a large brown bear, which they were taking east of the Jordan to amuse the women and children of the 'Adwân Bedawîn, as my guide, himself a chief of that tribe, informed me. We got past with difficulty, as our horses were greatly frightened at so sudden an apparition of such an animal in such a place. The rest of the ride to Nâblus was without incident or accident, over a wild, rocky, and barren region, until we entered the fertile plain below Sâlim.

How wide is the Ghôr, or Jordan valley, at the Dâmieh ford, and what is the character and appearance of the banks on either side of the river?

On the west the upper plateau of the Ghôr is about three miles wide, and quite level until it drops down suddenly some two hundred feet to the bed of the river. The bluffs, which overhang both the eastern and western side of the narrow river bottom, present a most singular appearance, often having sharply shaped conical peaks facing the river, and are composed entirely of a dull drab-colored clay or marl, which the winter rains have worn into innumerable gullies and narrow ravines. Their aspect is as forbidding as it is unique and striking, without a single pleasing feature to redeem them from absolute ugliness. That bottom through which the Jordan meanders is there about one mile wide, and much of it is so low as to be flooded in the rainy season. There alone are to be found the thickets and underbrush which conceal wild animals.

It is now the favorite haunt of the wild boar and the wolf, as it seems to have been of the lion in the time of Jeremiah. "Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan," as against Edom; and the prophet repeats the figure in exactly the same words in the next chapter, as against Babylon.[1] It is safe to conclude, therefore, that this river bottom then as now abounded in impenetrable thickets, and that there the lion had his lair, and from thence he made destructive forays into the neighboring districts.

How do you account for the fact that the valley of the Jordan is so neglected and forsaken? One naturally expects to find the banks of the only considerable river in Palestine crowded with inhabitants, and fertile as Egypt; yet the entire valley is now in very truth a dreary desert.

And always has been, I presume, except in those parts which were irrigated, not by the Jordan, however, but from streams which descended from the mountains, as in the neighborhood of Jericho, Beisân, and elsewhere. Even the little river which comes down Wady Fâri'a ought to convert the adjacent plain of the Ghôr into a fruitful paradise, and it would if there were inhabitants to cultivate the land, and security for the crops from Bedawîn robbers.

The reason why the Jordan is not utilized for irrigation is at once apparent at such localities as that of the Dâmieh ford. It flows two hundred feet below the general level of the Ghôr, and the canals for irrigation would have to be taken out far above, and conducted for miles over the plain at great expense, owing to the many gorges and precipitous ravines which cut through it to the river. The soil of the Ghôr itself is a stiff, hard clay, requiring much labor to render it productive, and a greater outlay of capital than the fellâhîn have ever possessed. Add to all this that the valley has generally been the border land between antagonistic tribes, and consequently unsafe, and one needs no longer to wonder at its desert character and oppressive loneliness.

It took our party once six hours steady riding from Dâmieh to Jericho, and after crossing the rattling brook of Wady Fâri'a, a few minutes south of the ford, we did not find a drop of water until we reached 'Ain es Sultân, and that was in the latter part of April. I could then understand, and rightly appreciate, the description given by Josephus of that sterile and arid Ghôr. Speaking of Jericho, he says: "It is situated in a plain, but a naked and barren mountain of a very great length hangs over it, which extends itself to the land about Scythopolis [Beisân] northward, but as far as the country of Sodom, and the utmost limits of the Lake Asphaltitis, southward. This mountain is all of it very uneven, and uninhabited by reason of its barrenness."

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[1] Jer. xlix. 19; l. 44.

After mentioning the opposite range, east of the Jordan, he continues the description of the plain: "Now the region that lies in the middle between these ridges of mountains is called the *Great Plain.* It reaches from the village Ginnabris as far as the Lake Asphaltitis; its length is two hundred and thirty furlongs, and its breadth a hundred and twenty, and it is divided in the midst by the Jordan. It hath two lakes in it, that of Asphaltitis, and that of Tiberias, whose natures are opposite to each other; for the former is salt and unfruitful, but that of Tiberias is sweet and fruitful. This plain is much burnt up in summer-time, and, by reason of the extraordinary heat, contains a very unwholesome air; it is destitute of water, excepting the river Jordan."

Josephus then expands the Biblical account of the healing of the water of 'Ain es Sultân, Elisha's Fountain, and his narrative furnishes a striking specimen of the manner in which the great Jewish historian dealt with Scripture records: "There is a fountain by Jericho that runs plentifully, and is very fit for watering the ground; it arises near the old city which Joshua the son of Nun, the general of the Hebrews, took the first of all the cities of the land of Canaan, by right of war. The report is that this fountain, at the beginning, caused not only the blasting of the earth and trees, but of the children; and that it was entirely of a sickly and corruptive nature to all things whatsoever, but that it was made gentle and very wholesome by the prophet Elisha."

Farther on he says: "To these prayers [for the healing of the fountain] Elisha joined proper operations of his hands, after a skilful manner, and changed the fountain; and that water, which had been the occasion of barrenness and famine before, from that time did supply a numerous posterity, and afford great abundance to the country. Accordingly, the power of it is so great in watering the ground, that if it do but once touch a country, it affords a sweeter nourishment than other waters do. Accordingly, it waters a larger space of ground than any other waters do, and passes along a plain of seventy furlongs long and twenty broad; wherein it affords nourishment to those most excellent gardens that are thick set with trees. There are in it many sorts of palm-trees that are watered by it, different from each other in taste and name; the better sort of them, when they are pressed, yield an excellent kind of honey. This country withal produces honey from bees; it also bears that balsam which is the most precious of all the fruits in that place; cypress-trees also, and those that bear myrobalanum; so that he who should pronounce this place to be divine would not be mistaken."

And thus the historian goes on to exalt that place over any other on the earth; but he admits that in the summer-time it is "so sadly burnt up that nobody cares to come to it." There I can thoroughly agree with him; but I have not found during any of my visits that "if the water be drawn up before sunrising, and after that exposed to the air, it becomes exceedingly cold, and becomes of a nature quite contrary to the ambient air; as in winter, again, it becomes warm; and if you go into it, it appears very gentle." But, in his own closing words, "so much shall suffice to have said about Jericho, and of the great happiness of its situation."[1]

My first ride along the southern half of the Jordan valley threw what was to me a new light on the scene of John's baptism. In Matthew it is called "the wilderness [eremos] of Judæa."[2] In Mark this wilderness is connected with the Jordan.[3] And in Luke we read that John "came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance."[4] From all three accounts, it is evident that the scene of John's preaching and baptism was mainly in the valley of the Jordan; but why it should have been called an eremos, a waste, desert, a region uninhabited, which is the ordinary meaning of the Greek word, always appeared strange to me. I knew that such was the character of the mountains west of the Dead Sea, and somehow or other I had associated the Baptist with that stern desolation; but no one can pass through the southern half of the great plain, or Jordan valley, now without feeling that he is traversing a dreary and lonely "wilderness," for which eremos is the most appropriate word.

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[1] B. J. iv. 8. [2] Matt. iii. 1–6. [3] Mark i. 4, 5. [4] Luke iii. 3.

Do you suppose that region was always in such a condition as you found it?

No guide could be obtained at the desolate ferry of Dâmieh, and at first we were sadly perplexed with numberless goat paths straying about in all directions amongst low bushes; but, by keeping well up along the western edge of the plain beneath Kŭrn Sŭrtabeh to get round the head of the gullies that run down towards the river, we ultimately found a path which took us directly south, over weary miles of dry, hard clay, mixed with rounded pebbles and stones brought down from the western mountains by the winter rains. This continued until near the oasis formed by the Fountain of Elisha. We met with no indication that the plain had ever been inhabited or cultivated, until within a few miles of 'Ain es Sultân. We did, indeed, pass two or three miserable sites with Willys or Muzârs, to which the poor fellâhîn occasionally resort, and a few places which may have been once partially cultivated; but, with those exceptions, the whole plain of the Jordan is an unprofitable waste. Farther west than our path, and especially at the opening of some of the wadys, the prospect was occasionally relieved by trees and green fields, but they belonged to the mountain region, and not to the plain or valley of the Jordan. So sunk is the narrow vale in which the Jordan itself meanders towards its sepulchre in the Sea of Death, that the river which trends eastward from the Dâmieh ford was never in sight from the plain of the Upper Ghôr, and even the line of trees along its margin was rarely visible.

Kŭrn Sŭrtabeh, which you passed en route to Jericho, I remember, presents the most prominent feature in the panorama of mountain and plain north of Jericho.

Lieutenant Conder has written an elaborate article to prove that the great altar of witness, or of Ed, which the warriors of the two and a half tribes built as they were returning home after the Conquest of Palestine, was erected on that lofty Kŭrn; and could I be as well satisfied with the identification as he appears to be, I would cordially endorse his closing remark, that "to future travellers in Palestine this discovery cannot fail to be of the highest interest." But his "discovery" will certainly not be accepted by Biblical critics without question. The narrative in the twenty-second chapter

THE JORDAN VALLEY.—KŬRN SŬRTABEH.[1]

of Joshua has generally been understood to imply that the altar was erected within the territory of those tribes, on the east of the Jordan, while Kŭrn Sŭrtabeh is an almost inaccessible mountain peak several miles west of the river. The remark of Josephus that, "when the tribe of Reuben and that of Gad, and as many of the Manassites as followed them, were passed over the river, they built an altar on the banks of Jordan, as a monument to posterity and a sign of their relation to those that should inhabit on the other side," is also apparently quite inconsistent with Lieutenant Conder's theory; for those tribes had just been dismissed by Joshua, and allowed to return to their homes on the east of the Jordan.[2]

Were I at liberty to decide the question according to my idea of the fitness of things, I should certainly place the altar on the west side of the river. The purpose for which it was built was to assert and establish the right to share in the religious blessings connected with the promised inheritance, and it would seem natural, therefore, that Ed, the "witness altar," should be within the sacred territory. However this may be decided, it seems evident, both from Joshua and Josephus, that the site of the altar was near the

[1] From a sketch by Mr. C. F. Tyrwhitt Drake.

[2] Ant. v. i. 26.

river, and this is a fatal objection to the claim of Kŭrn Sŭrtabeh.[1] The ruins on the top of that Kŭrn have been examined by other travellers, and are believed to be the remains of an old castle.

An element of uncertainty, strictly fundamental, pervades the whole subject. There is no evidence that the tribes crossed the Jordan either at or near the Dâmieh ford. The passage may have been made at some point many miles away from Dâmieh, either above or below it; and, unless this uncertainty can be eliminated from the problem, it seems useless to debate the matter.

Is the ford of ed Dâmieh and the ferry over the Jordan mentioned in the Bible? Being the main passage from Central Palestine into the regions east of the Jordan, one naturally expects to find some allusion to it in the sacred records.

It has been suggested that at or near it was situated "the city Adam" mentioned in Joshua iii. 16, where the waters of the Jordan "stood and rose up upon a heap" at the time when the Hebrews crossed over from the other side into the Promised Land. The context connects that city with Zaretan or Zarthan, and Van de Velde is inclined to identify that place with Kŭrn Sŭrtabeh, and also to find both names in 1 Kings vii. 46, which he would read, "The king cast them [the vessels, etc., of the temple] at Adam, between Succoth and Zarthan." This emendation of the text, or rather of the translation, may be regarded as doubtful, but it is easy to discover the name Adam in ed Dâmieh, and to that extent the suggestion is interesting. All traces of the city, if there ever was one there, seem to have disappeared. A careful survey of that neighborhood, however, may yet discover the sites of those lost cities, Adam and Zarthan.

A short distance above the Dâmieh ford, on the east side of the Jordan, are the remains of a Roman bridge. There were six arches leading to the present bed of the river, and it would require three more to reach the bluff on the west bank; but if these were ever built, all trace of them has been swept away. I think it probable that when the bridge was constructed the river ran beneath the six arches, and that the present channel west of them, in which the Jordan now flows, has been made since, causing thereby the abandon-

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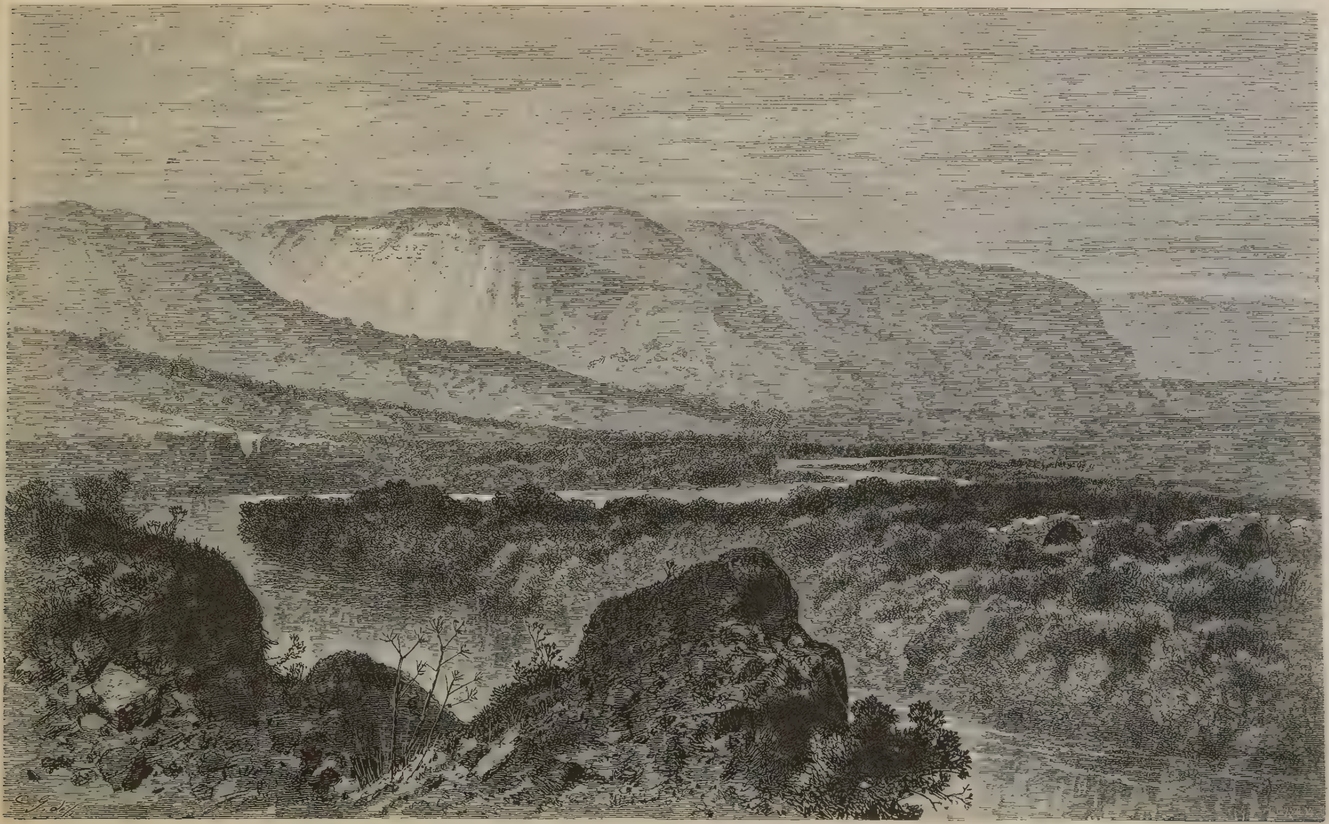
[1] Josh. xxii. 10.



BANKS AND BLUFFS OF THE JORDAN.—MUKHÂDAT ED DÂMIEH—THE DÂMIEH FORD.

ment and ruin of the bridge. It appears evident, also, that the Zerka, or river Jabbok, which enters the Jordan a short distance above the bridge, contributed to that ruin by wearing deep channels beneath some of the arches. During the winter floods the water still flows through a few of the broken arches.

The land between the ford and the bridge is so thickly overgrown with bushes as to quite conceal the ruins, and vegetation grows rank about them, especially the wild mustard. With the help of my guide, I uprooted a veritable mustard-tree which was more than twelve feet high. In the presence of such stout bushes, which overtop all surrounding "herbs," one feels that there was no exaggeration in the parable about "the mustard-seed:" "Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof."[1]

Amongst the incidents which may add interest to this vicinity is the probability that Jacob, returning from Padan-aram, brought his family and flocks down to it from Peniel after the meeting and parting with his brother Esau. On the theory "that Succoth was called Ter'alah in the Talmud," Dr. Merrill, of the American Exploration Society, who has carefully explored the region east of the Jordan, believes that he has discovered the site of Succoth at a tell now called Der 'Ala, about a mile north of the Jabbok, and three miles from where it enters the plain of the Jordan. This implies that Succoth was on the east side of that river; but Dr. Robinson and others locate it on the west side, at a site called Sâkût, several miles south of Beisân.

The Biblical narrative in the thirty-third chapter of Genesis gives no topograpical indication; but, as Jacob's next station was Shechem, it has generally been supposed that, after crossing the Jabbok, he descended to the Jordan valley on his way to that city. As the ford of ed Dâmieh is now, and appears always to have been the one most frequented, it is quite probable that Jacob's temporary abode was somewhere near it; but whether east or west of the Jordan, at Tell Der 'Ala or at Sâkût, must be regarded as still an open question.

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[1] Matt. xiii. 31, 32; Mark iv. 30-32; Luke xiii. 18, 19.

I see various places marked on the maps as fords, ed Dâmieh being one of them. For how great a part of the year is a boat necessary?

About four months, though the time varies in different seasons. I have seen even women wade through the Jordan in the early part of May; and when the autumn rains are late, the river does not rise much until midwinter. When there are late and heavy storms on the mountains of the Haurân and on Hermon, the river is full and strong until June, and all have to come to ed Dâmieh to get across it. That there is now but a single bridge over the Jordan between Tiberias and the Dead Sea is a disgrace to the Turkish Government. It occasionally happens that the boat at ed Dâmieh is disabled, and then the people have to travel several days northward to Jisr el Mejâmi'a, below the Lake of Tiberias. There is at present, however, a ferry at the ford of Nawâ'immeh, where the road from Jerusalem to es Salt crosses the river—a great convenience to both those cities.

Wady Fâri'a, the ford of ed Dâmieh, and the Jordan valley so absorbed our attention that we have given no heed to the country through which we have been passing since we left the summit of Mount Ebal.

No very great loss, since there is nothing of special interest in this rough and broken region. We have been crossing the watershed or dividing line between the streams that flow westward to the Mediterranean, and those that unite to make up the river of Wady Fâri'a. Our course, since leaving Ebal, has been nearly north; had we kept more to the eastward, we might have passed through several places of some historic note. Amongst them Tŭllûza, the Biblical Tirzah; and beyond it, to the north-east, is Tûbâs, the ancient Thebez, where the cruel and bloody Abimelech, after having taken the town, fought against the inhabitants, who had shut themselves up in the tower, or citadel. "And a certain woman cast a piece of a millstone upon Abimelech's head, and all to brake his skull. Then he called hastily unto the young man his armour-bearer, and said unto him, Draw thy sword, and slay me, that men say not of me, A woman slew him. And his young man thrust him through, and he died."[1] Tûbâs is now an inconsiderable village on the line of an ancient highway between Nâblus and Beisân, being thirteen Roman miles from the former city, according to the Onomasticon. Had we followed that route to the eastward, it would have taken us too far out of our way.

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[1] Judges ix. 50–56.

What is the name of that place on our left? It appears to be more prosperous than most of the villages in this region, for the houses are larger and better built.

It is called Jeb'a, and is probably the modern representative of one of the many Biblical Gebas or Gibeahs. It has a commanding situation on the brow of the mountain, and is the most important town between Sebŭstieh and Jenîn; and here we fall into the regular road leading to those cities. Here, also, the direct road to Nâblus branches off to the left. The country from Jeb'a to Sebŭstieh, or Samaria, is endlessly diversified with hill, and dale, and fertile valleys, which are well cultivated and thickly populated. The villages stand out boldly upon conspicuous positions, and rejoice in many a gushing fountain, thus confirming the testimony of the Bible and Josephus in regard to the district of Samaria.

The next village, about an hour farther on towards Jenîn, is Sânûr, supposed by some to be the ancient Bethulia of the Book of Judith, situated on a rocky, rounded, and almost isolated hill. It commands an extensive view in that region, and was formerly occupied and fortified by a fanatical Moslem population, nearly always in rebellion against the government, and ever ready to insult and even rob unprotected travellers. Forty years ago, when I passed this way, it was deserted, and in ruins. 'Abd Allah Pasha of Acre, in the year 1830, had summoned a large force from Mount Lebanon, then ruled by the Emîr Beshîr Shehâb, to co-operate with his own troops in besieging this robber stronghold. After three months, it was captured and burnt. Many incidents of the siege have been related to me by some of those who were engaged in that expedition. Sânûr has been rebuilt by its former inhabitants of the Beit Jerrâr faction, and they still retain much of their original character and reputation.

That beautiful little plain which we can see spread out below it towards the north-east, has it any distinctive name?

It is called Merj el Ghŭrûk, the drowned meadow, a name as ominous as it is appropriate. Beautiful as it now appears, I have seen it in winter covered, several feet deep, with yellowish muddy water. It is then a lake, nearly round, and about three miles in diameter. Early in the summer the lake dries up, and the soil, which is extremely rich and fertile, is then planted with cucumbers, melons, millet, or dûrah beida, as it is called by the natives, and other seifyât, summer crops. There are several such winter lakes in various parts of this country.

The small hamlet which we have just passed is Jerba, and an hour farther on is the large and flourishing village of Kŭbâtîyeh. That entire region, including the village itself, is covered with noble groves of large olive-trees.

This is the most delightful rural scenery we have traversed since leaving Jerusalem, and the villages are prettily situated on every hill-side. If I am not mistaken, we have had more than one glimpse of the plain of Esdraelon, far away to the north of us.

And from the top of the next hill, the vast expanse of that magnificent plain will open out before us like a sea of brilliant green, with the dark mountains of Galilee beyond. As we approach the plain of Esdraelon, the mountains subside into rounded hills, and these again decline into pretty vales, or open out into small, fertile plains, with villages planted all around them. Nothing is wanting to convert this region into a veritable paradise but intelligent, industrious, and peaceful inhabitants. And yet it is one of the most disturbed districts in all Palestine. The people are constantly quarrelling, either amongst themselves, or with bands of roving Bedawîn Arabs from beyond the Jordan, or they are in open rebellion against the government.

There are three or more leading and rival families or tribes who keep up this perpetual strife and bloodshed throughout this part of the land—Beit 'Abd el Hâdy and the Tokân tribe of 'Arrâbeh and Nâblus; Beit Jerrâr of Sânûr and Jenîn; and the R'ayân tribe of Bedawîn origin west of the Jordan. They are not now actually in rebellion, or fighting each other; and the fact may be noted as one of the indications that the government has succeeded to a certain extent in curbing those turbulent factions in this region. I was once stopped at Jenîn by one of these outbursts of civil strife, and obliged to make a long detour through the centre of Esdraelon to reach the sea-shore, and thus to get past the disturbed district. I shall long remember the cool way in which my guide, himself a cousin of the once famous chief, 'Akîl Aga, told a marauding party that if they touched me, or any person or thing under *his* protection, there would be no more khûbs [bread] for them on this side of the Jordan!

What was the special cause of disturbance on that occasion?

Some of the men of Beit 'Abd el Hâdy had attacked the villages in the district of Belâd er Rôhâh, south-east of Carmel; had burnt the houses, and driven off the cattle and flocks in true Highland, or rather Midianite, style. But what most excited the wrath, especially of the women in that region, was the report that the raiders had abused, and even killed, women and children. That was an enormity of crime which they vehemently declared had never been even heard of before; and, so far as I am aware, their assertion was true. During the civil wars that desolated Lebanon in 1841, and again in 1845, women were not molested even in the heat of battle. I have repeatedly seen those of both parties hastening with jars of water for the relief of their friends who were either wounded or suffering from thirst, and they were neither insulted nor molested. This same deference to women had always been shown in the region of er Rôhâh until that last outbreak, and hence their extreme exasperation. If any of the men of Beit 'Abd el Hâdy fell into their hands, they had vowed to roast them alive! There was, no doubt, some exaggeration in the reports of those atrocities, but the entire region between Jenîn and Nâblus was ablaze with the fires of civil war, and we were compelled to follow the sea-coast to Jaffa in order to reach Jerusalem.

We shall have the plain of Esdraelon around us for several days, and will become familiar with all parts of it. Our place of encampment is yet so many miles distant that we cannot even turn aside to visit Tell Dothân, which is only a short distance west of the village of Kŭbatîyeh.

Of course the existence of a site so celebrated in the romantic story of Joseph adds both interest and importance to this neighborhood; but I believe there are no ancient remains about it.

There is no reason, however, to doubt the identification, which is due to Van de Velde and Dr. Robinson. In the Onomasticon it is correctly placed at twelve Roman miles north of Samaria. Lieutenant Van de Velde's account of his discovery of the Tell is amusing. He says:

"I asked Abu Mansûr the name of the tell, and the answer was, 'Haida Dothân,' that is, Dothân.

"'Dothân,' I asked, 'Dothân?'

"'N'âhm [yes]; Dothân, Dothân, Dothân!' exclaimed the testy old sheikh, as if hurt at my not believing him at the instant."[1]

Dr. Robinson describes it as situated in the middle of the beautiful plain which extends in a south-westerly direction from Kefr Kûd, Capharcotia, to 'Attîl. It is now a fine green tell, with a fountain on its southern base. He was told "that the great road from Beisân and Zer'in to Ramleh and Egypt still leads through this plain, entering it west of Jenîn, passing near Kefr Kûd, and bending south-westward around Ya'bûd to the western plain. It is easy to see, therefore, that the Midianites, to whom Joseph was sold [at Dothan], had crossed the Jordan near Beisân, and were proceeding to Egypt along the ordinary road." It is obvious, too, that Joseph's brethren well knew the best places for pasture. They had exhausted that "of the Mŭkhna by Shechem, Nâblus, and had afterwards repaired to the still richer pasturage round Dothan."[2]

The fountain is called 'Ain el Hufîreh, and there, probably, Joseph's brethren may have watered their flocks, and around it they may have been seated, on the green grass, when they saw Joseph afar off. "And they said one to another, Behold, this dreamer cometh. Come now, therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit."[3]

Concerning the "pit," Lieutenant Anderson of the Palestine Exploration Fund thus writes: "The numerous rock-hewn cisterns that are found everywhere would furnish a suitable pit, in which they might have thrust him; and as these cisterns are shaped like a bottle with a narrow mouth, it would be impossible for any one imprisoned within to extricate himself without assistance. These cisterns are now all cracked and useless. They are, however, the most undoubted evidences that exist of the handiwork of the inhabitants in ancient times."[1] Into some such cistern did Joseph's brethren cast him—for the pit was empty; "there was no water in it"—utterly regardless of "the anguish of his soul" when he besought them and they would not hear.[2]

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[1] Syria and Palestine, vol. i. p. 364.

[2] Rob. Res. vol. iii. p. 122.

[3] Gen. xxxvii. 18–20.

The whole story of Joseph and his brethren reads like an Oriental romance, and in some parts seems almost incredible. For example, how could Joseph's brethren venture to return so soon to the scene of their treacherous slaughter of the people of Shechem?

To one unacquainted with this country such a proceeding would appear full of danger; and so, apparently, thought their father, who therefore said to Joseph, "Go, I pray thee, see whether it be well with thy brethren, and well with the flocks; and bring me word again." Yet there may have been very little cause for apprehension, since it is probable that Shechem itself was then regarded as their property.[3] That they could return thither in perfect safety a year or two after the bloody tragedy enacted by them, is in accordance with what is often done in this same land in modern times. I have witnessed incidents equally strange in Lebanon. In 1845 the entire southern half of that mountain was laid waste by a cruel civil war. I knew of villages in which a part of the inhabitants rose against the other part, butchered, and even burnt in the fire of their habitations, both the dead and the living. Subsequently the other party got the upper hand, and committed similar atrocities. And yet in less than one year the survivors of both parties returned, rebuilt their ruined habitations, and dwelt together as before. Thus it may have been in Shechem. By means of negotiations, not even alluded to in the narrative, the sons of Jacob may have been permitted to return and pasture their flocks there. Having exhausted the pasture in that neighborhood, they removed to Dothan, and there Joseph found them. This is also quite natural, for all tribes rich in flocks must continually change their pasture-ground.

The most extraordinary thing in the entire narrative is the conduct of Jacob in sending his beloved Joseph on such an errand, and all alone.

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[1] Rec. of Jer. p. 360, 361.

[2] Gen. xxxvii. 24; xlii. 21.

[3] Gen. xxxvii. 12–14.

Even this can be illustrated by reference to the customs of modern Arab tribes. They frequently wander far from their encampments on errands often perilous. Joseph was a lad of uncommon courage and prudence, and his father had doubtless unbounded confidence in him. Probably this was not the first time that he had made trial of his ability to execute such a mission; at any rate, Joseph was despatched alone from Hebron to Shechem, more than two days' journey through a region not by any means safe even from wild beasts. And here, again, the narrative coincides with other Biblical statements in regard to the presence at that time of such dangerous animals in Palestine. Lions, bears, panthers, and wolves were common in those days; and hence the ease with which poor Jacob was convinced of the death of Joseph by a sight of the blood-stained coat of many colors: "It is my son's coat," he cried; "an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces."[1] The whole account is in admirable accord with itself, and with all the circumstances and characters mentioned. Even the monstrous cruelty of the brothers need not astonish any one who recalls their previous history, or who has witnessed the tragedies still enacted in this unhappy land.

Alas for a country thus torn and distracted by domestic and civil strife! "Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there?"

None, certainly, able to restore the moral health of this people, any more than there was "for the hurt of the daughter of" Zion in the days of Jeremiah the prophet.[2]

Those Ishmaelite merchants were carrying balm of Gilead down to Egypt; was it the same as that which was cultivated with such care in the gardens of Jericho in the days of Solomon?

Modern botanists suppose that it was not, because it is doubtful whether that "balsam" or balm was then found in this country. They consider that the balm of those trading Ishmaelites, and that which Jacob afterwards sent to Joseph in Egypt, as well as the balm twice referred to by Jeremiah more than a thousand years later for its medicinal qualities, was the gum of the lentisk-tree, the Pistacia lentiscus of botanists, and the gum mastic of commerce. Mastic is a resinous chewing-gum familiar to every native of the

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[1] Gen. xxxvii. 33.

[2] Jer. viii. 21, 22.

East, and largely used in the manufacture of varnish abroad; but possesses no extraordinary healing virtue.

But we must come back to Tell Dothân. Though it is now forsaken, it may have been inhabited in ancient times. The great prophet Elisha, on one memorable occasion, resided either upon it or at a place near by. The King of Syria being informed that his counsels were disclosed to the King of Israel by the prophet, was anxious to capture him; and, discovering that he was in Dothan, "he sent thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about." In the morning Elisha's servant, terrified at the sight of the besieging host, exclaimed, "Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."[1]

The entire series of incidents recorded in that sixth chapter of 2 Kings—the smiting with blindness of the Syrian host; their allowing the prophet to allure them into Samaria; the conduct of the King of Israel, who, when he saw they were in his power, said unto Elisha, "My father, shall I smite them? shall I smite them?" But he was answered, "Thou shalt not smite them: wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive? set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master." And so he did, with the happy result that "the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel"—all these incidents are most extraordinary. If all the kings of the earth adopted similar methods of conquering peace, wars would cease, and mankind dwell together in harmony and security.

Some distance back we passed a cluster of large oak-trees, and the lower branches of one of them were hung with bits of rag of every variety of shape and color. What is the meaning of this ornamentation?

That was one of the haunted or "inhabited trees," supposed to be the abode of evil spirits; and those bits of rag are suspended upon the branches to protect the wayfarer from their malign influence. There are many such trees in all parts of the country, and the superstitious inhabitants are afraid to sleep under them.

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[1] 2 Kings vi. 8–18.

Our long descent down the bed of Wady Bel'amy has brought us in sight of Jenîn. In winter this valley is full of large fountains, and is then very muddy; while in summer it is dry as an oven, and as hot as a furnace.

Jenîn seems to be a well-built town, and certainly it has some claim to beauty, situated amidst fruit orchards and large gardens. The prickly-pear hedges have a formidable appearance, but its palm-trees, grouped about the mosk, bespeak peace.

Its reputation, however, is not assuring. The town and the gardens owe their flourishing condition to a fine stream which bursts out in the valley above, and is conducted thence to the fountain in the middle of the place. The stream, after irrigating the gardens, flows away in a northerly direction through the plain. 'Ain Jenîn is the most distant source of the Kishon, in this neighborhood, "that ancient river, the river Kishon;" but, except in winter, the stream from it is all absorbed by the gardens, which extend some distance into the plain of Esdraelon, north of the town. Jenîn is now the chief town between Nâblus and Nazareth, and has a population of about twenty-five hundred, all Moslems, fanatical, rude, and rebellious, with the exception of a few families of the Greek faith. The inhabitants deal in all the products of the country, and their best customers are the Bedawîn Arabs on the east of the Jordan.

The ancient city was allotted to the tribe of Issachar, and given to a Levitical family of "the children of Gershon, with her suburbs."[1] Its Hebrew name En-gannim has been changed—the En, for fountain, was dropped, and the gannim, gardens, transformed into the present word Jenîn. The road from Jerusalem to Nazareth and Acre passes by Jenîn, and its position accords well with Beth-gan, translated "the garden-house," and mentioned in connection with the flight and death of Ahaziah, King of Judah. "And Jehu followed after him, and said, Smite him also in the chariot. And they did so, and he fled to Megiddo, and died there."[2] Josephus calls it Ginea, and says that it lay in the great plain, and was the limit on the north of the province of Samaria. And here oc-

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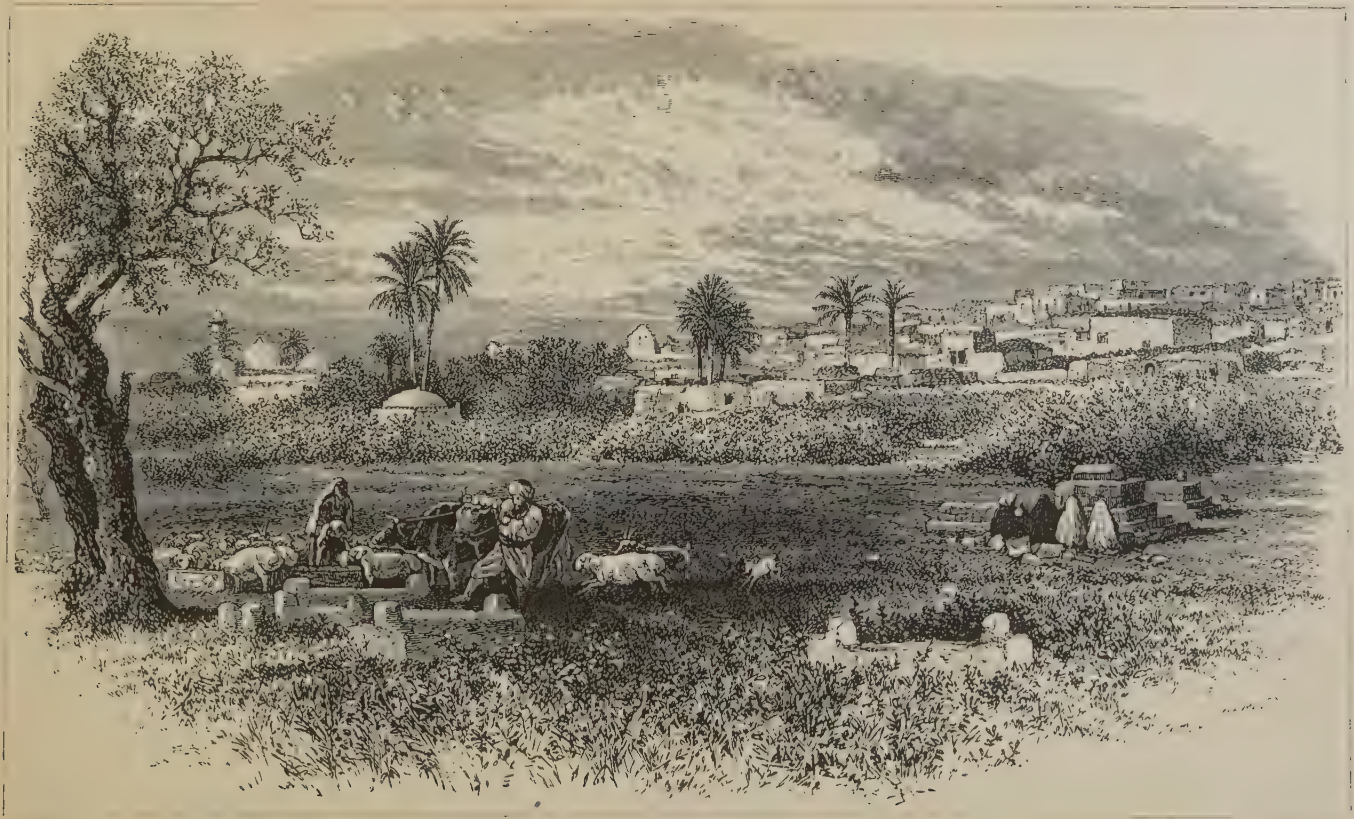
[1] Josh. xix. 21; xxi. 27–29.

[2] 2 Kings ix. 27.



JENÎN—EN-GANNIM.

curred, according to the same historian, a massacre of the Galileans by the Samaritans, which intensified the bitter hatred then existing between the Jews and the Samaritans.[1] Jenîn disappears from history until the time of the Crusades, and then the Arabian writers frequently mention it in connection with Saladin. Being about midway between Nazareth and Samaria, travellers often spend the night here, as I have done more than once; but we have concluded to pass the coming day of rest at Zer'în or Jezreel, and so will continue our ride for two and a half hours farther on to that place.

There is not much to interest one between Jenîn and Zer'în except the undulating plain of Esdraelon itself, which spreads away westward to the foot of Carmel, and northward to the hills of Nazareth, with Little Hermon, Jebel ed Dŭhy, in the centre. The road skirts the base of Mount Gilboa on our right, and is comparatively level. An arm of the plain runs far up eastward amongst the hills, and near its end is a place called Kefr Kûd, believed to mark the site of Caparcotia, mentioned by Ptolemy and in the Peutinger Tables as twenty-eight miles from Cæsarea, on the road to Scythopolis or Beisân.

Does the mountain range on our right still bear the name of Gilboa?

Amongst the natives it has various designations, generally taken from the villages situated upon it. Its most comprehensive name is Jebel Făkû'ah, also derived from a village situated near the centre of the range. Not far south of that place is another village called Jelbôn, which may be considered as preserving the Biblical name of Gilboa.

Somewhere upon those heights, I suppose, was fought that disastrous battle with the Philistines in which "Saul and Jonathan his son" were slain?

Possibly at or near that lofty and rocky promontory, where are the ruins of a village and fortress called Wezâr, and a modern Neby or Muzâr, a Moslem place of pilgrimage. There may even be an allusion to this very conspicuous site in the lament of David over those fallen heroes. "The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places [Ye mountains of Gilboa]: O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thy high places. How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! Saul and Jonathan were pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided."

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[1] Ant. xx. vi. 1.

We have the whole theatre of that bloody battle before us. On the morning of that disastrous day, "the lords of the Philistines passed on by hundreds and by thousands" out of the valley of Jezreel, and joined battle with Israel upon those rough mountains south-east of it. Israel was beaten and fled, closely pursued by their victorious enemies, and Saul and his sons were surrounded and cut down. "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon. Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain, upon you, nor fields of offerings: for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away." The victorious Philistines descended to Beth-shan, and there fastened the body of Saul to the wall of the city. Sad, sad day to Israel, and doubly sad to David. "O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women. How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!"[1]

When I was young, it was customary to speak of Gilboa as still suffering the curse of David, and withered as a wilderness without dew, or rain, or any green thing to relieve its stern desolation.

In my experience I have had abundant evidence that both dew and rain descend there as copiously as elsewhere. David's pathetic imprecation had no more influence upon the mountain, or on the clouds, than had Job's malediction upon the day of his birth; nor was either expected to produce any such malign effects. Similar expressions of profound sorrow or of deep displeasure found elsewhere in the Bible are common in the East. Jeremiah says, "Cursed be the day wherein I was born: let not the day wherein my mother bare me be blessed."[2] The feeling, or at least the thought, that gives rise to it is natural. The child vents its displeasure upon its toy; the boy strikes the stone against which he stumbles; the man curses adverse winds, and everything which annoys him resists his will or thwarts his plans.

In regard to those imprecations, and others in the Bible like them, we should remember that they were not intended to react upon the physical and material elements of nature. The same remark applies with equal truth to many of the "burdens" of prophecy. Announced in figurative terms drawn from natural objects, yet every child knows, or ought to, that neither the figure nor the object were accountable agents. Even the denunciations against cities such as Tyre, Damascus, Gaza, Askelon, Babylon, Jerusalem, and many others, must, in general, be restricted to the inhabitants, and not to their habitations. God has no controversy with earth, and rocks, and ruins; nor do I believe that this land of Palestine now lies under any physical curse which renders it unfruitful or unhealthy. The rains—early, middle, and latter—are sufficiently abundant, and the dews as copious as ever; the fields, also, yield as generous harvests to the careful cultivator as they formerly did.

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[1] 2 Sam. i. 17–27.

[2] Jer. xx. 14.

This is perhaps true, and yet I have a "feeling" that it is not the whole truth.

I have not said that it was. It is not the sum total of my own ideas on this subject. Such a place as the vale of Siddim, I suppose, was really burnt and blasted by the direct agency of God; and some other spots once fertile may now exhibit tokens of the displeasure of the Almighty "for the wickedness of the inhabitants thereof," and as a warning to the world. And in a certain sense the whole earth has been smitten with a curse, and, in consequence, produces thorns and thistles instead of wholesome fruits. But the desolation of this glorious plain, for example, is in no sense the effect of any physical change in the soil or climate, but is owing entirely to the people who dwell here now, and to the Bedawîn who destroy it; and the same is true of Gilboa.

The soil must be very fertile. The gardens of Jenîn stretch for some distance this way down the plain, and have quite an attractive appearance.

In reality, many parts of Esdraelon are remarkably productive, and there are numerous villages around it. But there is little profit in mere names to which no historic interest is attached, and therefore I leave you to admire, without interruption, the ever-varying plain along which our pathway lies quite to the fields of Zer'în, the ancient Jezreel.

VI.

ZER'ÎN TO HAIFA.

Zer'în, Jezreel.—Biblical Sites and Scenes around Zer'în.—'Ain Jâlûd, Fountain of Jezreel, and the Well of Harod.—Trial of Gideon's Army at the Water of Jezreel.—Camp of Gideon and that of the Midianites.—Invasions of the Ishmaelites, Ancient and Modern.—Ophrah.—Threshing Wheat by the Wine-press in the Vineyard.—Baal-worship in the Time of Gideon.—Daring Exploits of Gideon.—Gideon's Army of Thirty-two Thousand reduced to Three Hundred.—The Midianite dreams of a Cake of Barley-bread.—Josephus's Version of the Dream.—Gideon's Stratagem of Trumpets, and Lamps in Pitchers.—Dismay and Destruction of the Midianite Host.—Pursuit of the Midianites by the surrounding Tribes of Israel.—Onset of Gideon before the Dawn similar to that of the Bedawîn.—Gold Ear-rings of the Midianites.—Shŭttah, Beth-shittah.—Beth-barah.—Bethabara.—John the Baptist.—The Patriarch Jacob.—Abel-meholah.—"Elisha ploughing, with Twelve Yoke of Oxen before him."—Camp of Saul and that of the Philistines.—'Ain Jâlûd and the Fountain of Goliath.—The Watch-tower of Jezreel.—Jehu and his Company.—Death of Joram and Amaziah.—Tragic Fate of Jezebel.—Naboth's Vineyard.—Ferocious Dogs at Jezreel.—Ancient and Modern Custom of Painting the Eye.—Jezreel, God will sow.—The Valley of Achar, the Door of Hope.—Valley of Jezreel.—Tell Hŭsn at Beisân.—Miry Road between Zer'în and Beisân.—From Tiberias to Beisân.—Village of Beisân.—Beth-shean.—The Water Supply.—The Acropolis, and its Wall and Gate.—Walls and Fortifications of the City.—Khân el Ahmar.—Nŭbk-trees at Neby Habîb.—Property left in the Protection of the Neby.—Biblical History of Beth-shean.—Scythopolis.—Beisân, Beth-shean.—Scythopolis a City of Temples and Public Edifices.—Lieutenant Conder's Description of the Roman Ruins and Rock-cut Tombs.—The Theatre.—The Hippodrome.—The Tombs.—Dr. Robinson's Description of the Roman Arch over the Jâlûd.—Natural Advantages of Beisân.—Tŭbŭkat Fahel, Pella.—Road from Zer'în to Sôlam.—Jebel ed Dŭhy, Little Hermon.—Biblical Allusions to Tabor and Hermon.—Luxury of Oriental Travel, and Scenes along the Highways.—Village of Sôlam.—Sôlam, Shunem.—Biblical Notices of Shunem.—Elijah and Elisha.—The Good Shunamite.—The Shunamite's Son raised to Life.—Confiscation of Property.—The Wild Gourd.—Jebel ed Dŭhy not a Crater.—Basaltic Bowlders on the Road to Endôr.—Visit of Saul to the Witch of Endor.—Expedition of the Patriarchs and Bedawîn in the Preparation of Special Repasts.—Nein, Nain.—Jesus restores the Widow's Son to Life.—El Fûleh, Castle of Faba.—'Afûleh.—Battle of Mount Tabor.—Defeat of the Turks by the French.—Desolation of Esdraelon by the Bedawîn.—Merj Ibn 'Amîr, the Plain of

Esdraelon.—The Battle-field of Palestine.—The Kishon.—Water-shed of the Plain.—Taanach and Megiddo.—Lejjûn, Legio.—Lieutenant Conder's Identification of Mejedd'a.—Biblical References to Megiddo.—The Waters of Megiddo.—Armageddon.—Battle-field of Barak.—Tell el Mutsellim.—Tell Ta'annûk.—Description of the Battle and Flight of the Canaanites.—Harosheth of the Gentiles.—Heber the Kenite.—Death of Sisera at the Hand of Jael.—Deborah's Triumphal Song.—The Nail or Tent-pin.—The Mother of Sisera.—Deborah.—Remarkable Trees.—Sites on the Northern Border of Esdraelon.—Depopulation of Villages.—Tell el Kŭssîs.—Apostasy of Israel.—Ahab, Obadiah, Elijah.—Priests of Baal.—Elijah's Sacrifice on Carmel.—Slaughter of the Priests of Baal.—Elijah prays for Rain.—Vespasian at el Muhrakah, the Place of Sacrifice.—Supply of Water for Elijah's Sacrifice.—Elijah runneth before the Chariot of Ahab.—The Place where Ahab met Elijah.—The Three Years' Drouth.—Pass of the Kishon from Esdraelon to the Plain of Acre.—'Ain es Sa'adîyeh, the Permanent Source of the Kishon.—The Sea at Haifa.

Sunday, May 11th.

THIS quiet Sabbath morning I walked over from our tents to Zer'în, and explored the place. Once the abode of royalty, there are now not more than twenty-five or thirty wretched hovels all told, and there is nothing regal about it at present.

It is, however, historically suggestive of Gideon and Saul, Ahab and Jezebel, Naboth and Jehu; of victory and defeat, crime and murder; the utter extinction of the families, both of the slayer and the slain, and the final overthrow of the kingdom of Israel itself. The situation of Zer'în is commanding, and the view in every direction extensive.

East of it rises the high mountain range of Gilboa, and below it "the valley of Jezreel" sweeps round eastward and southward to the Jordan. On the north, Jebel ed Dûhy, Little Hermon, swells up like another Tabor; and to the west and south is the magnificent plain of Esdraelon, surrounded by the mountains of Galilee, "the excellency of Carmel," and the fat hills of Samaria. Besides the square tower now used as a mudâfeh, or inn, there is little to attract attention in the village itself. A few stones, built here and there in the rude huts, seem to claim the honors of antiquity; and the sarcophagi near our tents are certainly relics of old Jezreel. That city could never have been large or splendid. The greater part of it was probably mere mud hovels, and yet there may have been some well-built palaces when Ahab resided here with his bold but wicked queen.

In this treeless place, where we are encamped, there is nothing to shield us from the burning sun, and our tent is becoming uncomfortably warm. We shall find most grateful the shadow of the rocks above 'Ain Jalûd, at the base of the mountain, about half an hour's walk east of Zer'în. The way to it leads through the village, and we may turn aside and examine the traces of an old castle that once overlooked the valley north and east of it, and commanded the ascent from the fountain to the city. Nothing of it is now visible except the mere outline, but it is about the only indication of ancient Jezreel that remains.

ZER'ÎN—JEZREEL.

Is this copious fountain and pretty pool down to which our walk has brought us "the fountain of Jezreel?"

It may also be "the well [fountain] of Harod," beside which "Gideon, and all the people that were with him, pitched: so that the host of the Midianites were on the north side of them, by the hill of Moreh, in the valley."[1] At least this pool was most likely "the water" down to which Gideon was commanded by the Lord to bring his men, that he might "try them there." "So he brought down the people unto the water: and the Lord said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself. And the number that lapped were three hundred. And the Lord said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand."[2] It is evident from the narrative that Gideon occupied the mountain above 'Ain Jalûd, and it is easy to understand how he could safely bring his men down to this fountain, for the part of the valley below it is wet and marshy, and the Midianites must have been encamped along the northern edge of it, some two or three miles distant.

In those sad days when "because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which are in the mountains, and caves, and strong holds. And so it was, when Israel had sown, that the Midianites came up, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, with their cattle and their tents, and they came as grasshoppers for multitude; for both they and their camels were without number: and they entered into the land to destroy it."[3] In precisely the same manner do the Bedawîn Arabs, the modern Midianites, come up the valley of Jezreel after the people have sown, and not only destroy the increase of the field, but commit cruel murders, as did "the two kings of Midian" upon the brethren of Gideon at Tabor.[4] In fact, the sacred historian expressly says that those Midianites were Ishmaelites, and we have under our very eyes the descendants of that ancient people, ready to commit similar depredations in the very same spot.

But have you any Gideon to work out deliverance for this oppressed and impoverished country?

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[1] Judges vii. 1. [2] Judges vii. 1–7. [3] Judges vi. 2, 3, 5. [4] Judges viii. 12, 18–21.

Alas! no; I fear many generations will pass away before any adequate liberator can arise. The history of Gideon, however, is very remarkable, and we are in the midst of scenes immortalized by his glorious achievements. Ophrah, the city of his inheritance, was probably on the general range of mountains south of Zer'în. When he comes into notice, the Midianite invaders lay along in this valley of Jezreel "as grasshoppers for multitude." It was harvest-time, and later in the season than this, else you would disturb at every step numberless red, white, blue, yellow, and green winged grasshoppers in these very fields, thus reminding you of the appropriateness of the simile.

Gideon, instead of carrying his grain to the threshing-floor, took it into the midst of his vineyard, to hide it from those Ishmaelites. "Summer threshing-floors" are in the open country, and on elevated positions, to catch the wind when winnowing the grain, and of course they would be altogether unsafe at such a time, while the vineyards are often hid away in valleys, and better adapted for concealment. I have seen grain thus secreted in many parts of this country during the lawless days of civil war. By the wine-press, in his vineyard, the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, and said, "The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour."[1] After confirming his faith by wonderful miracles, he commissioned him to destroy the enemies of Israel. "And the Lord looked upon him, and said, Go in this thy might, and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites: have not I sent thee?"

This whole narrative read here amongst the scenes described is life-like and stirring. The angel came and sat under an oak, as you and I would do in one of those mountain vineyards; for the harvest sun renders shade grateful, and the oak is the tree you will frequently find near ancient wine-presses. Gideon's father had a grove and an altar to Baal, the abomination of the Zidonians, and that reveals the sad religious apostasy of even Gideon's family. Gideon is commanded to destroy both grove and altar, and from that act he received the name of "Jerubbaal, because he hath thrown down his altar."[2] Having performed this daring deed, he blew a trumpet, and assembled about him, out of Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, thirty-two thousand men.[1] We are in the centre of these tribes, and can see at a glance from whence he gathered his army.

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[1] Judges vi. 11–25.

[2] Judges vi. 32.

It is worthy of remark that the men of Issachar are not mentioned, and we can readily imagine the reason. The people of Issachar lived on the great plain of Esdraelon, and were, of course, at the mercy of the Midianites. They therefore could not join the army of Gideon. Of those assembled, twenty-two thousand were afraid, and returned home at the first offer. Of the ten thousand remaining, all were dismissed, by divine command, at the "water," save "the three hundred" that drank by "putting their hand to their mouth," a common act throughout the land at this day, and which I have often seen done, and not always by heroes either. Those three hundred alone were retained, and that very night that small band moved forward to the brow of the steep mountain which overhangs the vale and the fountain of Jezreel. Gideon, with Phurah his servant, let himself cautiously down from rock to rock until he stood amongst the tents of their enemies. There he overheard a man telling his fellow this strange story: "Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along. And his fellow answered and said, This is nothing else save the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel: for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host."[2] This dispelled every lingering doubt, and Gideon returned to order the attack at once.

What possible analogy can there be between a sword and a cake of barley bread that could have suggested "the interpretation" to that Midianite?

As to the line of connection in the mind of the interpreter, we may remember that barley bread is only eaten by the poor and the unfortunate. The natives, at this day, complain that their oppressors have left them nothing but barley bread to eat. That was the identical lamentation of a peasant who rode with me from Zer'în to Jenîn. The cake of barley bread was therefore naturally supposed to belong to the oppressed Israelites; it came down from the mountain where Gideon was known to be; it overthrew the tent so that it lay along, foreshadowing destruction from some quarter. It was a contemptible antagonist, and yet scarcely more so than Gideon in the eyes of the proud Midianites. That the interpreter should hit upon the true significance of the dream is not, therefore, very wonderful; and if the Midianites were accustomed to call Gideon and his band "eaters of barley bread," as their successors, the haughty Bedawîn, often use the same expression to ridicule their enemies, the application would be all the more natural. At any rate, the interpreter read the riddle aright.

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[1] Judges vi. 34, 35; vii. 3.

[2] Judges vii. 1–14.

Josephus thus amplifies and expands both the dream and the interpretation thereof: "He thought he saw a barley cake—such a one as could hardly be eaten by men it was so vile—rolling through the camp, and overthrowing the royal tent, and the tents of all the soldiers. Now the other soldier explained this vision to mean the destruction of the army, and told them what his reason was which made him so conjecture, that the seed called barley was allowed to be of the vilest sort of seed, and that the Israelites were known to be the vilest of all the people of Asia."[1]

What a strange stratagem that was of Gideon!

Yet it was well adapted to produce the effect intended; nor was the device a remarkable one. I have seen the small oil lamps of the natives carried in "empty pitchers" or earthen vessels at night. Armed with this curious weapon, the three companies took up their positions round the slumbering host, which we read "lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude." That it was the valley of Jezreel is distinctly stated in Judges vi. 33, and also somewhere above Shŭttah, is evident from the fact that the routed Midianites fled first to that place, then called Beth-shittah.[2]

Gideon would, no doubt, leave the road towards the Jordan open for the enemy to take in his flight, and so one band of lamp-bearers must have been stationed along the base of the hill below Zer'în; another between it and Sôlam, along the west side of the host; and the third band would stand upon the brow of the hill, extending down eastward towards Shŭttah. Thus arranged around the slumbering Midianites, at a given signal the three hundred pitchers were broken, three hundred trumpets brayed harsh alarms on every side, and three hundred lights, as of so many different bands of assailants, flashed upon their blinded eyes. It is not wonderful, therefore, that the terrified host rushed in wild dismay and dire confusion one upon another. The valley of Jezreel is intersected by numerous watercourses, with bottomless mud; flying in the darkness, and terror-struck, the Midianite host would be precipitated into them rank upon rank, and mistaking friend for foe, "every man's sword was against his fellow." The vastness itself of the army would render the rout more ruinous; and in that frightful slaughter "there fell an hundred and twenty thousand men that drew sword."[1]

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[1] Ant. v. vi. 4.

[2] Judges vii. 22.

How was it possible for the men of Naphtali, Asher, and Manasseh to hear the news and join in the pursuit of the Midianites in so short a time, and amidst the urgencies of such a day?

We have before us the very battle-ground, and the fleeing host must have passed Shŭttah to the north-east of us. Look around, and you find that the cities given to Manasseh, on the west of Jordan, were along the southern margin of Esdraelon, and on the hills above. Asher came down to Carmel, at the west end of Esdraelon. A portion of Naphtali occupied the western shore of the lake of Tiberias. All of the thirty-two thousand, excepting the three hundred, had but recently returned, or were on their way to their homes. It was possible, therefore, for them to receive the summons and respond to it. The attack of Gideon was at night, and, in all probability, just before the break of day. He could not have gone down to the camp of the Midianites, returned, and made all the necessary arrangements for the attack, before the night was far spent. Burckhardt tells us that it is the invariable custom of the Bedawîn—these modern Midianites—to select that time for their assaults. It is proverbially the darkest part of the night, and both men and animals are then buried in deepest sleep. The very watch-dogs become drowsy. Besides, if successful, they want the opening light to complete the victory and secure the plunder; and if defeated, they need the light of day to gather up their scattered bands and make good their retreat. Gideon had the entire day, and that in harvest-time, to collect the surrounding tribes and pursue the flying foes.

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[1] Judges vii. 15–23; viii. 10.

Is it still the custom for men amongst these Bedawîn "Ishmaelites" to wear gold ear-rings, as did the Midianites in the time of Gideon?

I have often seen them thus adorned, and among certain of the tribes it is quite the fashion. Bedawîn women not only wear them in their ears, but large rings are also suspended from the nose. These are the face jewels, I suppose, which are mentioned very early in Biblical history.[1]

The victory of Gideon over the Midianites was achieved in the valley of Jezreel, and it is said that they "fled to Beth-shittah in Zererath, and to the border of Abel-meholah, unto Tabbath."[2] Are the sites of those places known?

Shŭttah, on the road from Sôlam to Beîsan, is doubtless the Beth-shittah to which they first came, and it lies in the natural and almost necessary line of their flight, since they were encamped in the valley of Jezreel, between Sôlam and Zer'în. None of the other places have been identified with any certainty. Zererath was a distinct site, and the correct rendering in Judges vii. 22 is given in the margin, "towards Zererath," which must have been situated farther down the valley towards the Jordan, as were also Abel-meholah and Tabbath, the remaining two places mentioned. The only hope of safety for the Midianites lay in their reaching and crossing the Jordan, and in that direction they fled with all possible speed. They made for the ford at Beth-barah, and "the waters" mentioned in connection with the Jordan, in the twenty-fourth verse of that chapter, were probably the strong streams from 'Ain Jalûd and Beîsân, which descend below the latter city in a south-eastern direction through Ghôr Beîsân to the river. If so, we must look for all these sites along that line.

Beth-barah was on the Jordan; but whether it is identical with the Bethabara where John was baptizing, or the place which was well known and greatly resorted to for baptism in the time of Eusebius, more than fifteen hundred years after the victory of Gideon, must be regarded as doubtful.[3] Both sites are now lost, if indeed they were not one and the same place. Both names indicate the existence of a well-known ford, and it was doubtless on this account that the routed Midianites fled thither. The true site of either, or both, may yet be ascertained. At that same ford, I suppose, the patriarch Jacob, with his large caravan, crossed over Jordan after parting with his brother Esau; and near it may have been Succoth, where Jacob "built him an house, and made booths for his cattle."[1] This coincides with the general tenor of the Biblical narrative, which next locates the patriarch at Shechem.

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[1] Gen. xxiv. 22, 47.

[2] Judges vii. 22.

[3] John i. 28; x. 40.

These topographical problems call for careful examination, and must ere long receive it. Abel-meholah, the home of Elisha the prophet, must be somewhere on the same line, and probably below and to the south-east of Beîsan, for it is implied in the list of places found in 1 Kings iv. 12, that Abel-meholah was not only below Jezreel, but farther down the Jordan valley than Beth-shean.[2] The only circumstance of interest connected with that place conveys the idea that it was a fine agricultural village; for when Elijah threw his mantle over Elisha the prophet was ploughing, "with twelve yoke of oxen before him, and he with the twelfth;" that is, as I understand it, there were eleven ploughs ahead of him, and he was guiding the last one, the twelfth.[3] Only in very large fields or on extensive plains will you now find so many ploughs at work.

When looking down from Tell Hŭsn, many years ago, through Ghôr Beîsan, and marking out the course of "the waters" that rushed and roared beneath it on their way to the Jordan far to the south-east, I remember remarking that the whole of that part of the Ghôr might be irrigated by those waters, and turned into a rural paradise. Such it may have been when men like Elisha dwelt at Abel-meholah, the "meadow of dancing," as the original name may signify. In early spring much of the plain is still a beautiful meadow; but there is no Abel there, and no young men to guide the plough; and the only beings I ever saw leap or dance on that green were the graceful gazelles.

Long after the exploits of Gideon and the discomfiture of the Midianites the army of Saul pitched near this same fountain of 'Ain Jalûd the night before the fatal battle with the Philistines on Mount Gilboa, and the two armies must have then occupied the same relative position as the men of Gideon and the Midianite host.

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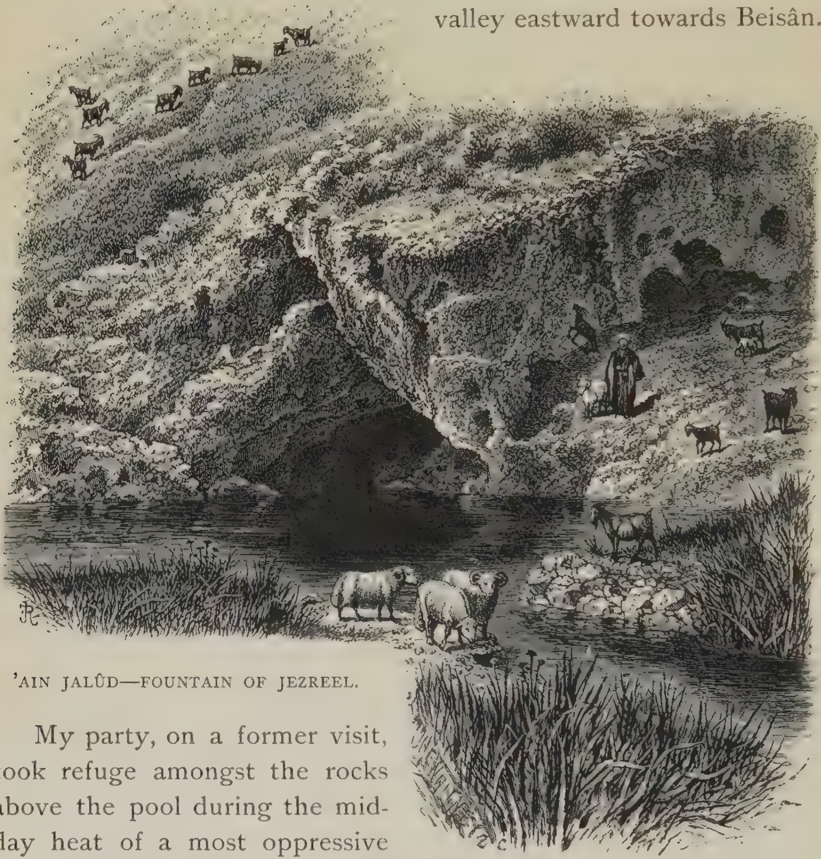
[1] Gen. xxxiii. 16, 17.

[2] 1 Kings xix. 16.

[3] 1 Kings xix. 19.

The fountain itself flows out in part from a cavern in the base of the cliff, or from crevices in the rocks, and in part bubbles up from the bottom of the pool. Indeed, the pool is made entirely by a dam, apparently ancient, and from it the water is carried off to drive a succession of mills down the valley eastward towards Beisân.



'AIN JALÛD—FOUNTAIN OF JEZREEL.

My party, on a former visit, took refuge amongst the rocks above the pool during the mid-day heat of a most oppressive sirocco, and in the mean while our artist took a photograph of the place. The pool itself was crowded with cattle, and the shepherd boys shared the luxury of a bath, in common with sheep and oxen, mud-turtles and countless fishes. The rocky crags above were dotted over with long-eared Syrian goats, but they would not stand still, and, by their fidgety restlessness, almost lost the chance of being immortalized in the picture.

A tradition as far back as the sixth century strangely located the victory of David over Goliath in this valley, and the fountain is called 'Ain Jalûd—the fountain of Goliath—by Arab writers, that name, no doubt, suggested by this mistaken legend.

That apology for a castle east of the village may now stand upon the site of the watch-tower from which the rebel Jehu was first seen coming up the valley of Jezreel.[1] The south part of the valley is marshy, and nearer this way the brook from the fountain of Jalûd, with its spongy banks and mill-races, renders that side impassable; and the ancient road must have then passed along the north side of the valley as it now does. Jehu and his company could, therefore, be seen for several miles from the tower of Jezreel driving furiously along that road, and there was time enough to despatch horseman after horseman to meet him. He must, of course, have come past Beisân, because Ramoth-gilead was south-east of it, on the other side of Jordan, and he was commander of the garrison there when proclaimed king by his fellow-officers.

Immediately he set out in hot haste to slay Joram and seize the government. Joram, Ahab's son, went out against Jehu, and they must have met somewhere near the fountain. His victim fled before him; "and Jehu drew a bow with his full strength, and smote Jehoram between his arms, and the arrow went out at his heart."[2] Having killed Joram, Jehu ordered his body to be "cast in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite; for," said he, "the Lord laid this burden upon him: Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth, and of his sons; and I will requite thee in this plat, saith the Lord."[3] Nor did he hesitate a moment to kill Ahaziah the King of Judah also. Then, entering the city, he ordered the eunuchs to cast the infamous Jezebel out of the window of her palace. "So they threw her down: and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall, and on the horses: and he trode her under foot."[4]

After this terrible day's work, Jehu went in to eat and drink; and, remembering Jezebel, he said, "Go, see now this cursed woman, and bury her: for she is a king's daughter. But they found no more of her than the skull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands. Wherefore the word of the Lord, which he spake by his servant Elijah," was fulfilled, "saying, In the portion of Jezreel shall dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel."[1]

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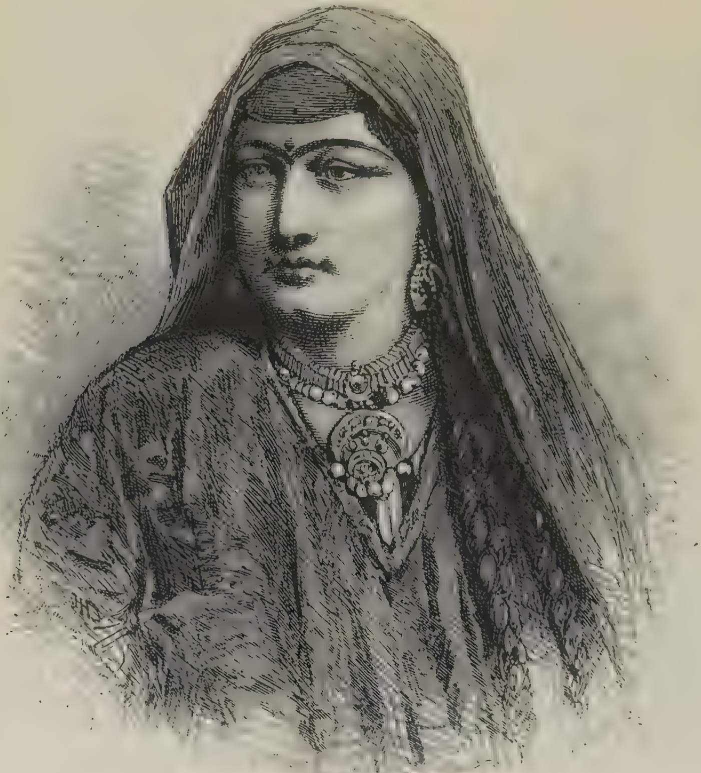
[1] 2 Kings ix. 17. [2] 2 Kings ix. 24. [3] 2 Kings ix. 25, 26. [4] 2 Kings ix. 33.

The field of Naboth which Ahab coveted was probably in the valley east of the city, near the fountain of 'Ain Jalûd. Water was necessary "for a garden of herbs," and there is no other perennial fountain in that neighborhood.[2]



PAINTED EYES AND EYEBROWS.

The whole history of that revolution shows Jehu to have been a man of vehement energy and desperate daring, and the entire narrative in 2 Kings ix. is full of most emphatic lessons of instruction and warning to tyrants. The blood of Naboth was trebly avenged; first upon Ahab himself, then upon his son Joram, and finally on the wicked Jezebel, who had instigated the murder.

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[1] 2 Kings ix. 34–36.

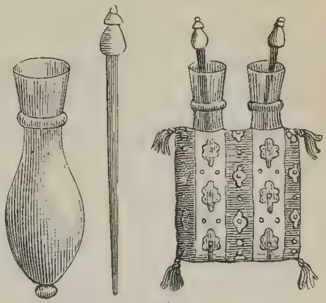
[2] 1 Kings xxi.

It must have been a strange state of things when dogs were so abundant and ferocious as to devour Jezebel's body during the short time that elapsed before search was made for it.

The canine race generally bear some resemblance in disposition to the character of the times and of their keepers. We may readily believe, therefore, that those under the palace of Jezebel were sufficiently savage. They may have been taught to devour the wretched victims of her cruelty, in which case the retribution would be remarkably appropriate and emphatic.

What is meant by, "and she painted her face," or, as in the margin, "put her eyes in painting?"[1]

Simply that which has been and is still the favorite mode of beautifying the face amongst the ladies of this country. They "paint" or blacken the edge of the eyelids and eyebrows with kŏhl, and prolong the application in a decreasing pencil, so as to lengthen and reduce the eye in appearance to what is called almond shape. It imparts a peculiar brilliancy to the eye, and a languishing, amorous cast to the whole countenance. Brides are thus painted, and many heighten the effect by application to the cheeks of colored cosmetics. The practice is extremely ancient; this is shown by the sculptures and paintings in the oldest Egyptian temples; and even the kŏhl vessels, probes, and remains of black powder have been found in ancient tombs. The powder from which kŏhl is made is collected from burning almond-shells or frankincense, and is intensely black. Antimony and various ores of lead are also employed for their medicinal properties. The powder is kept in phials or pots, which are often disposed in a handsomely worked cover or case; and it is applied to the eye by a small probe of wood, ivory, or silver, called el meel;



MEEL AND MŬKHŬLY.

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[1] 2 Kings ix. 30.

this is dipped in water, and then into the powder, and the blackened point is drawn between the half-closed lids of the eyes. The whole apparatus is named el mŭkhŭly.

It is to this custom, probably, that Jeremiah alludes. Ezekiel refers to it also, and possibly Solomon in his Book of Proverbs.[1]

The name Jezreel, God will sow, seems to have reference to the adaptation of this place for growing grain.

This neighborhood is celebrated for its wheat, and a peculiar kind is called Nûrsy, from the village of Nûris on the mountain. The grain is long and slender, while that of the Haurân is short and plump. The latter brings the highest price in market.

Hosea intimates that God would "avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu," and farther that the final overthrow of Israel should be "in the valley of Jezreel."[2] Treason and murder must be punished, even though vengeance slumbers through many generations. What is the explanation of that singular passage—"It shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel?"[3]

You may read thus: the Lord will hear the heavens calling for the vapor and the cloud. The clouds shall hear the parched earth calling for rain. The earth, in turn, shall hear the languishing corn, and wine, and oil, and grant the nourishment required. Jezreel, also, the valley of vengeance and destruction, shall in that happy time be heard calling for the peaceful products of husbandry. Jezreel—God himself will then sow her with the seed of peace and righteousness. There is evidently a play upon the name Jezreel, and an unexpressed blending of the bloody tragedies enacted in this valley with promises of better things in reserve for the true people of Israel.

The passage begins with another most obscure but significant figure: "I will give her" [Israel] "the valley of Achor for a door of hope." That valley ran up from Gilgal towards Bethel. There Achan, the troubler of Israel, was stoned to death, and by that act the anger of the Lord was turned away from Israel, and the door of entrance to the promised inheritance thrown open.[4] Achor means trouble. Thus the valley of "trouble was the door through which Israel at first entered the land of Canaan. And thus again the Lord, by his prophet, promised to lead Israel to peace and rest through the valley of affliction." The very indistinctness of this figurative mode of utterance makes it the more suggestive. "The valley of Achor"—"a door of hope." Not a bad motto for those who through much tribulation must enter the Promised Land—the Canaan of eternal peace and rest.

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[1] Jer. iv. 30; Ezek. xxiii. 40; Prov. vi. 25.

[2] Hosea i. 4, 5.

[3] Hosea ii. 21–23.

[4] Hosea ii. 15; Josh. vii. 24–26.

The valley of Jezreel seems to expand and spread out to a great distance towards the south-east. To which of the tribes did it belong?

Esdraelon and its surrounding hills and vales constituted the portion of Issachar, and yet we learn from the seventeenth chapter of Joshua that many important cities in and about it were given to Manasseh. Beth-shean, Endor, Taanach, Megiddo, and this valley of Jezreel itself, belonged to that tribe, or, rather, were assigned to them, for they do not appear to have got possession of those cities. "The children of Joseph" complained that "all the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron, both they who are of Beth-shean and her towns, and they who are of the valley of Jezreel," and therefore they could not drive them out.[1] That is the earliest mention of the valley of Jezreel. Chariots of iron have indeed disappeared, but the inhabitants are still eminently impracticable and rebellious; and one can readily believe that when the "jumping chariot" raged through the vale of Jezreel and down the Ghôr of Beisân, the children of Joseph found it impossible to expel the ancient inhabitants.

In my walk this morning I noticed a large tell far down towards the Jordan: is it near the ruins of Beisân?

It was the acropolis of the old town, and is now called Tell Hŭsn. It dominates the ruins that mark the site of Beth-shean—the Scythopolis of the Greeks—the Beisân of the Arabs.

Shall we go to it and visit those ruins to-morrow? It seems to be quite near, and the valley of Jezreel looks exceptionally green and inviting.

It is three hours distant from here; and it would take a day to go there and return, as we would have to do, for our route lies in a contrary direction; besides, the road is amongst the most troublesome in the country. I have passed over it more than once, and never without having some of the baggage animals stick fast in the mud. Dr. Robinson was obliged to have the loads taken off the mules, and carried over the miry places on men's shoulders. Instead, therefore, of repeating past experiments, I prefer giving you the results of former visits. At different times I have spent four days and as many nights in that now desolate and dangerous locality, and have gone to it by various routes.

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[1] Josh. xvii. 16.

Once I went to Beisân direct from Tiberias in a little more than six hours. The itinerary, in brief, runs thus: half an hour to the Baths, south of the latter place; one hour to Kerak, at the outgoing of the Jordan; half an hour to el Mansûrah; half an hour to the entrance of the Jermuk into the Jordan; half an hour to Jisr el Mejâmi'a; and half an hour more to the camp of 'Akîl 'Agâ near the hills on the western side of the Ghôr, and close to the bank of the Sherrâr below Kaukab el Hawa. We then kept to the south along the base of the hills, with the valley of the Jordan on our left. The Ghôr constantly widened by the falling back of the hills on our right, until the valley of Jezreel, in which Beisân is situated, opened to the west its noble expanse. From Beisân eastward it is called Ghôr Beisân, and it spreads out to the south-east farther than the eye can follow.

In one hour and ten minutes from 'Akîl's camp we passed a ruin with a few short columns, called Nusleh, near a large encampment of Arabs. In twenty minutes we came to Wady 'Osheh, with a large tell of the same name, and in ten minutes farther the stream from Wady Mukhŭrkŭsh crosses the plain on its way to the Jordan. The ruin called es Soudah, half an hour southward, has several columns and sarcophagi, and from that onwards the remains of the ancient Beth-shean began to appear, and constantly multiplied for nearly an hour before we reached the Kŭsr. We rode rapidly, and the distance from Tiberias cannot be less than twenty-four miles. For the last hour there was a steady ascent, and the aneroid indicated an elevation for Beisân above the Jordan of about five hundred feet. Owing to this, the whole plain might be watered by the fountains that send their copious streams across the site of Beisân. In fact I hardly know of any district in this country possessing greater agricultural and manufacturing advantages than that Ghôr, and yet it is utterly desolate.

But to our description. About half a mile south of Tell Hŭsn is a square tower, called el Kŭsr, constructed in part of large blocks of white limestone. Around it are grouped some fifty wretched hovels, the modern village of Beisân, loosely built of trap-rock, and ready to tumble down upon their inhabitants, who are as sinister a looking set as can be found anywhere, and in fact as great robbers as the Bedawîn themselves. They are the remnant of an Egyptian colony previous to the time of Ibrahim Pasha, and, being strangers, are greatly oppressed by the Arabs of the Ghôr.

The ancient city consisted of several distinct quarters, or wards, separated by deep ravines, with noisy cascades leaping over ledges of black basalt. There are four considerable brooks, all of which take their rise in large marshes to the south-west of the city, and so high above it as to send their waters over every part of the area; and it is evident, from the tufaceous deposits in all directions, that the inhabitants made good use of their privileges in this respect. From the quantity of this tufa high up the sides of Tell Hŭsn, it would appear that the water must have been carried to its summit, and such is the native tradition; though how that was accomplished is not now apparent.

The largest wards of the city appear to have been around the present Kŭsr and on the west of Tell Hŭsn, the acropolis of the ancient town; but there are extensive ruins both to the east and north of it. Wady el Jalûd passes down on the north side of the tell, and Wady el L'ab on the south, meeting below, and thus almost surrounding it. The position of the tell is, therefore, very strong, and it rises to a height of about two hundred feet, with its sides nearly perpendicular. A strong wall was carried round the summit, and the gate-way was high up the declivity at the north-west angle. In the buttresses of this gate-way are built fragments of columns and Corinthian capitals, which prove that it is a comparatively modern structure. I do not think that the city could have been all embraced within a single general wall, for it would have required one at least five miles long. It is more probable that the various wards, separated as they were by deep ravines, had each its independent fortifications.

On the north side of Wady Jalûd, opposite Tell Hŭsn, is Khân el Ahmar, one of those mediæval caravansaries built to protect trade and travel. It was about two hundred and fifty feet square, well constructed of large stone, and having a fine gate-way on its northern face. Now it protects nothing but a band of robbers, in league with the surrounding Bedawîn, even though oppressed by them. I once spent a very uncomfortable Sabbath amongst its dilapidated vaults, and in wandering about the remains of the ancient city. I found shelter from the burning sun of an extremely hot day in a grove of nŭbk-trees near the centre of the place, and was much interested in the native tradition connected with Neby Habîb, whose tomb is held most sacred by the ignorant and lawless Arabs. The peasants from the surrounding neighborhood hang upon those nŭbk-trees, or stow away by the side of the Neby's tomb, their saddles, halters, ploughs, yokes, goads, grain-bags, and every kind of household article, and leave all unguarded, since no one will dare to steal anything placed under the protection of so holy and vindictive a custodian. Even the wells, or rather underground cisterns, for preserving and concealing the grain, were made near the wely, so as to be under the protection of Neby Habîb.

Beth-shean has figured largely in the history of this country from a very early age. It was given to Manasseh, but, like many other grants, seems never to have been in their possession.[1] It was upon the wall which then surrounded the tell, I suppose, that the bodies of Saul and his sons were fastened by the Philistines after the battle on Gilboa; and this supposition enables us to understand how the men of Jabesh-gilead could execute their daring exploit of carrying them away. Jabesh-gilead was on the mountain east of the Jordan, in full view of Beth-shean; and those brave men could creep up to the tell, along Wady Jalûd, without being seen, while the deafening roar of the brook would render it impossible for them to be heard. The people of Jabesh-gilead had not a good character amongst their brethren. None of them came up to the war against

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[1] Josh. xvii. 11, 16; Judges i. 27; 1 Chron. vii. 29.

Benjamin in the matter of the Levite and his concubine, and for this neglect they were condemned to utter destruction.[1] In the days of Saul, however, it had again become a considerable city, and had acquired a fair reputation. All Israel hastened, with almost incredible despatch, to rescue it from the cruel doom of Nahash the Ammonite.[2] It was no doubt in gratitude for this deliverance, effected wholly through the energy of Saul, that the men of Jabesh-gilead hazarded their lives in order to secure his headless body from insult. History should always rejoice to record noble deeds, and most of all those instances of public gratitude which now and then throw a gleam of sunlight over its gloomy chronicles of selfishness and sin.

Beth-shean is mentioned in connection with other towns as pertaining to one of the "twelve officers which provided victuals for the king [Solomon] and his household."[3] At what time it took the name of Scythopolis, and on what account, is uncertain. Some suppose it was so called from a colony of Scythians who got possession of it. This is more probable than that its name was derived from Succoth, a place several miles to the south-east of it. Be this as it may, it is thus called in the Apocryphal Books, in Josephus, who often mentions it, and by nearly all the classic geographers. It early became a Christian city, with a bishop of its own, and was the ecclesiastical metropolis of the Third Palestine. Beisân is, of course, merely the Arabic form of the original name Beth-shean.

Beisân, or rather Scythopolis, was a city of temples and public edifices, and their number can be ascertained, and their localities traced out, from partial foundations and prostrate columns. According to Lieutenant Conder, "The principal Roman ruins are the theatre, hippodrome, and some large tombs. The tell fortifications are possibly Crusading, and a ruined mosque, two fine viaducts, and a good-sized khân, no doubt Saracenic. The theatre, situated in the basin which isolates the tell, and through which two streams flow, joining at the lower bridge, is built of black basalt, and in better preservation than most of the ruins of the country. It is a semicircle and a third, being closed on the north by a massive wall, which forms the chord to an arc of one hundred and twenty degrees.

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[1] Judges xxi. 8–12.

[2] 1 Sam. xi. 1–11.

[3] 1 Kings iv. 7, 12.

Nine vomitories remain more or less perfect. They are double, and out of the western passage of each a narrow gallery leads diagonally to a cage open towards the interior of the theatre. There seems to have been twelve rows of benches, eighteen inches high. The stream from a mill flows close to the theatre, and may have been turned into a basin for the naval entertainments.

"The hippodrome is almost entirely destroyed. It appears to have been constructed by two circles of seventy-six feet radius, with centres one hundred and twenty-eight feet apart. Its longest axis is nearly east and west; the entrance probably on the east. Stone seats eighteen inches high surround it on all sides.

"Capitals, fragments of ornamentation, and other indications, prove the great extent of the town, which stretched south of the modern village, and both north and south of the main stream of Wady Jalûd. The tombs, cut in cliffs close to the stream, contain sarcophagi, larger than the loculi, placed in a row parallel with the length of the chamber. Not far from them is a fine cistern, once roofed over. The extent of the Roman town we were able to make out, fully tracing its walls, nine feet thick, of black basalt, including an area of one-third of a square mile."

"Over the Jalûd, just below the tell, is thrown a fine Roman arch, with a smaller one on each side, resting upon an artificial mound." Dr. Robinson thinks that "the middle arch is too high for a bridge," and that "possibly the city wall was carried over the mound and arch; though for that, too, it appears too high."[1]

Whenever a good government shall restore order and security to this region, Beisân will rapidly become an important city. Its situation, water privileges, and other advantages would not only make it a delightful residence, but render it a manufacturing centre. Machinery of all kinds might be driven with the least possible expense by its powerful streams. Then the valley of Jezreel above it, irrigated by the Jalûd, and the Ghôr of Beisân below, watered in every part by fertilizing brooks, would be capable of sustaining a large and industrious population. Besides, Beisân is the natural highway from Bashan and the country east of the Jordan to the sea-board at Haifa and Acre, and also to southern Palestine and Egypt.

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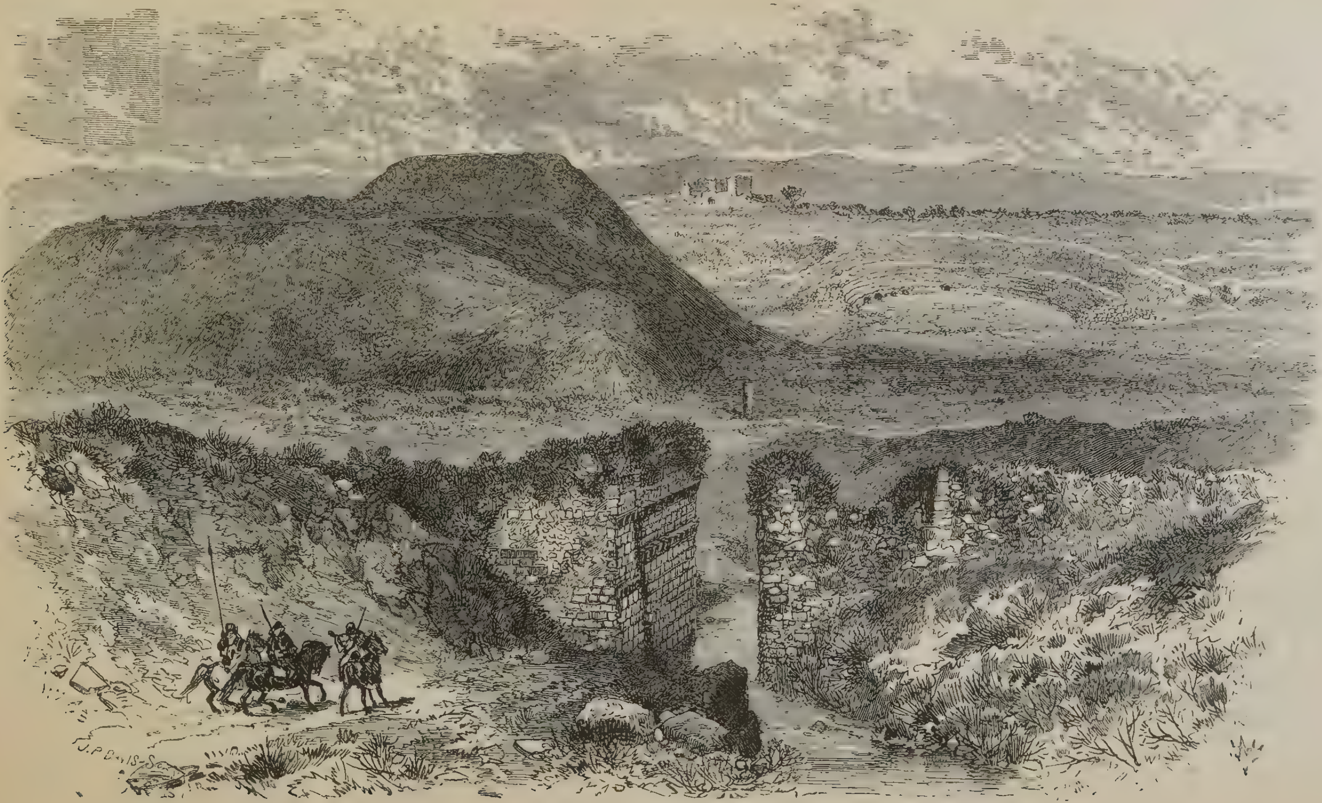
[1] Rob. Res. vol. iii. p. 328.



BEISÂN—BETH-SHEAN.

could suggest the idea that it was in this neighborhood is in the eighty-ninth Psalm and twelfth verse. But there is no reason to believe that Jebel ed Dŭhy is referred to in that Psalm.

This is the very luxury of travel—bright days, a clear, blue sky, air cool and fragrant, hill-side and vale robed in green, and spangled with brilliant flowers—bird and beast, and man himself, gay and happy. . . .

At least while spring lasts.

Nor must the appearance of the inhabitants, their dark skins, bright eyes, white teeth, and wonderful taste in the combination of the brightest colors, be forgotten. Nothing could be more picturesque than our road—the women in their red, or black, or white veils gracefully disposed about the person; their heads erect, supporting well-shaped jars brimful of water; their long, pointed sleeves trailing to the ground; their skirts looped up; their red or yellow shoes carried in their hands or tucked into their girdles. The sheikh in a purple and gold jacket, full blue cloth trousers, scarlet leather boots, a white silk cloak, and yellow and gold keffîyeh, or party-colored head-dress, seated on his gray mare, with a red saddle and long, brown tassels dangling on either side. And then the dusky camel-drivers, in black or white head-dress, loose shirt, and striped brown and white 'abbas, or cloaks, riding, bare-legged and with swinging feet, on diminutive donkeys, before long trains of clumsy, stupid, dull-colored camels, alternating with flocks of black goats, long-eared and lean, brown or white sheep with fat tails, and small, ill-conditioned oxen, red, white and black, or piebald, lingering around the way-side fountain or the well. Such a picture, in color more varied even, is seen on almost any road throughout the land.[1]

Before entering Sôlam, let us ride up the side of Jebel ed Dŭhy to an elevation sufficiently high to command a good view of the village and its surroundings, so interesting in the romance of Biblical history, if such an expression be allowable.

Of the village itself little need be said. Its situation is well chosen, having the fertile valley of Jezreel between it and Zer'în, with Gilboa beyond to the south-east. Sôlam contains about two hundred families of poor peasants, lodged in less than half as many

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[1] Lieutenant Conder's Reports.

SÔLAM—SHUNEM.

hovels, some of these nearly concealed by large dunghills, a sure sign of fertile fields and abundant harvests. It has a fair supply of good water, though the village fountain, it is true, is not copious, but there are others towards Fûleh, and in the valley below. Prickly-pear hedges surround its gardens of orange, lemon, pomegranate, fig, and olive trees, a possession quite exceptional for Esdraelon. There are also many beehives, an indication of thrift, so far as the bees are concerned, which we have not heretofore met with. For some reason, I know not what, Sôlam has suffered less from the Bedawîn than other villages on the plain of Esdraelon.

Sôlam is the modern representative of ancient Shunem, a city of Issachar.[1] It affords an admirable camping-ground for an army. Jebel ed Dŭhy, possibly "the hill of Moreh," rises abruptly behind it, commanding a perfect view of the plain of Esdraelon in every direction, so that there could be no surprise, nor could the advance be impeded nor the retreat cut off. "In the valley" below the Midianites encamped previous to the night attack of Gideon and his army; and here the Philistines pitched their tents before that

[1] Josh. xix. 18.

day when Israel was beaten, and Saul and his sons were slain on Mount Gilboa.[1]

Here "they sought and found Abishag, a Shunammite, and brought her to the king [David]. And the damsel was very fair, and ministered to him."[2] In this immediate neighborhood, Elijah the Tishbite, and his scarcely less wonderful disciple Elisha, performed their amazing miracles. Here, in this very village, dwelt "the good Shunammite," who built "a little chamber [an 'allîyeh, or upper room] on the wall" for the "holy man of God, and set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick."[3] In some part of these fields, which slope down southward into the valley of Jezreel, her only son, given in reward for her hospitality to Elisha, received a stroke of the sun while looking at the reapers, and this may well have been the case, for the valley glows like a furnace in harvest-time. The poor lad cries out to his father, "My head, my head!" and, being carried home to his mother, "he sat on her knees till noon, and then died."[4] Elisha was on Carmel—probably near the altar of Elijah—at el Mahrakah, ten or twelve miles off. "Then she saddled an ass, and said to her servant, Drive, and go forward; slack not thy riding for me, except I bid thee," and she hastened westward down the plain to the foot of Carmel. The man of God, seeing her coming in such haste, fears some calamity, and sends Gehazi to meet her with these three inquiries, "Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well;" but at the same time she rushed up the "hill" and seized the prophet by his feet.[5]

This scene is natural, and very graphic. If you ask after a person at this day whom you know to be sick, the reply at first will invariably be, "He is *well, thank* God," even when the very next sentence is to inform you that he is dying. Then the falling down, clasping the feet, etc., are actions frequently witnessed. I have had this done to me often before I could prevent it. So, also, the officious zeal of the wicked Gehazi, who would thrust the broken-hearted mother away, probably thinking her touch pollution, agrees perfectly with what we know of the man, and of the customs of the East, both ancient and modern. So, likewise, are the injunctions to Gehazi: "Gird up thy loins [that thou mayest run]; if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not"—this is no time for idle compliments. The man of God followed with the mother; and when he had brought back her son to life, "she fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out." Nothing can exceed the touching simplicity of this narrative.

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[1] Judges vii. 1; 1 Sam. xxviii. 4; xxxi. 1, 2, 8.

[2] 1 Kings i. 3, 4.

[3] 2 Kings iv. 8–10.

[4] 2 Kings iv. 19, 20.

[5] 2 Kings iv. 24–27.

How came it to pass that "the good Shunammite" lost her land by merely going to reside during the famine in the country of the Philistines, as we read in the eighth chapter of 2 Kings?

It is still common to confiscate the property of any person who is exiled for a time, or who moves away from his district. Especially is this true of widows and orphans, and the Shunammite was then a widow. And small is the chance to such of having their property restored, unless they can secure the mediation of some one more influential than themselves. The conversation between the king and Gehazi about his master is also in perfect keeping with the habits of Eastern princes; and the appearance of the widow and her son so opportunely would have the same effect now that it had then. Not only the land but all the fruits of it would be restored. There is an air of genuine verisimilitude in such simple narratives which it is quite impossible for persons not intimately familiar with Oriental manners to appreciate fully, but which stamps the incidents with undoubted certainty. The thing happened just as recorded. It is too natural now even to have been an invention or fabrication.

Elisha seems to have had no settled place of abode. We read of him in Carmel, in Shunem, in Jezreel, in Gilgal, on the banks of the Jordan, in Dothan, in Samaria, and even in Damascus. I have long wanted to inquire what kind of wild gourd it was that poisoned the "pottage," and gave occasion for the performance at Gilgal of one of his many miracles.[1] Is there anything satisfactory known about it?

Not much more than what the prophet's son that gathered them knew. The Septuagint does not translate but gives the Hebrew word, showing that those learned men did not know what it was; and if they could not determine the question, it is not likely that we can at this day. The Latin Bible calls it wild colocynth. The English renders it by the vague word gourd. I can hardly believe it was colocynth, because this is so well known, so bitter, and so poisonous, that the most ignorant peasants never dream of making pottage of it. He must have been a very stupid son of a prophet, indeed, to have filled his "lap" with them. Various other "herbs" have been selected by critics, as the Cucumis prophetarum, a small, prickly gourd, rarely met with in this country.

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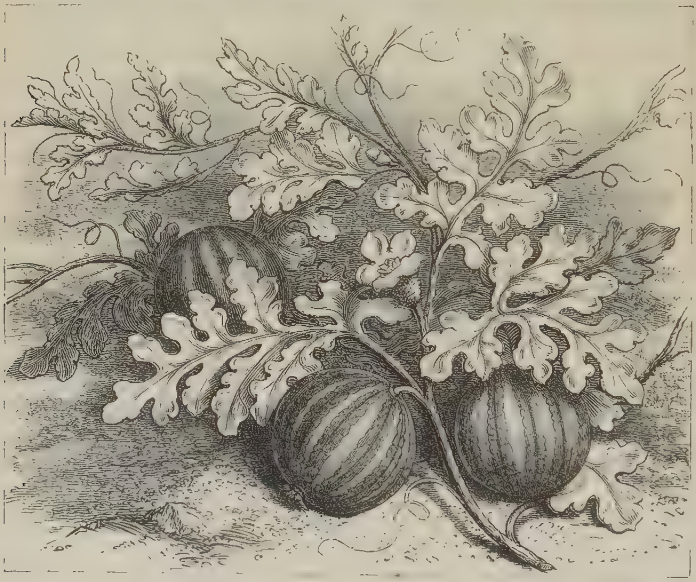
[1] 2 Kings iv. 38–41.



HUNDAL—COLOCYNTH—CITRULLUS COLOCYNTHIS.

The Hebrew root seems to point to some herb that bursts or splits open, and some have thought that it might be the Ecbalium elaterium, which is found in various parts of the country, and is poisonous. When green, it might be mistaken for an edible "gourd" or cucumber, but when ripe it cannot be "gathered" at all, for it bursts on the slightest pressure with spasmodic violence, scattering the seeds in all directions. The fact that this elaterium is called by the natives făkkî'a may favor the idea that it was the "wild gourd" of the narrative, for this word is nearly the Arabic for the Hebrew pakku'oth, in the plural.

Jebel ed Dŭhy looks like a volcanic cone, but of course it is not, for the substratum of this region seems to be calcareous limestone.

It is certainly not an extinct crater, though doubtless formed by the upheaval of the strata, and the country east of it is entirely volcanic. Our pathway around the east side of the mountain to Endôr leads over a vast field of basaltic bowlders, amongst which you will need to guide your horse with circumspection. The soil of this region is extremely fertile, and richly rewards the peasants of Shŭttah and other villages in the neighborhood, who cultivate its broad fields. And there is Endôr on our left, the home of the witch to whom King Saul resorted the night before his death.[1]

It is a small and wretched hamlet, but the position at the northern end of Jebel ed Dŭhy, facing Tabor, and overlooking the plain of Esdraelon between those two mountains, is very fine.

The distance across the plain is about four miles, for I have come to Endôr from the base of Tabor in a little more than an hour, easy riding. Let us pass through the village and inspect the suspicious-looking hovels of its present inhabitants.

You observe that there are caves in the hill-side, and that some of the habitations are made by merely building rude walls around the entrance to them.

Observe, too, that cattle are stabled in the lower part of the cave, while their owners occupy the other. And so it was probably in the time of Saul. The "witch" may have dwelt in one of these caves, and in its dark recesses secretly performed her "damnable sorceries." The whole place is in striking accord with its ancient story; and these old hags, grinning at us from the yawning mouths of their blackened habitations, look more like witches than women. How they curse the fathers and grandfathers of "the Christian dogs," a kind of salutation you now hear from the vilest people in the country.

Whether witches or not, they are undoubtedly "possessed," as the Arabs say, and we may as well pass on out of their sight.

No one can come here without recalling the secret visit of King

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[1] 1 Sam. xxviii. 3–25.

Saul by night to consult the "woman that [had] a familiar spirit at En-dor." At the request of the king she called up Samuel. "And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice. And he [Saul] said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself. And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do."

The reply of the aged prophet concludes with the terrible announcement, "To-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines. Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel: and there was no strength in him."

At the compassionate entreaty of the witch, the doomed king was prevailed upon to partake of her quickly prepared meal. "And the woman had a fat calf in the house; and she hasted, and killed it, and took flour, and kneaded it, and did bake unleavened bread thereof: and she brought it before Saul, and before his servants; and they did eat. Then they rose up, and went away that night."[1]

It must have been a fearful adventure, for the Philistines were encamped in the valley of Jezreel, between En-dor and Gilboa.

See, here are half a dozen little calves at the mouth of this cave, kept up from their mothers, who are at pasture under the care of the shepherd. I do not mean that there is anything unusual in this, but merely that just such a calf did the witch kill for Saul on that dismal night when he sought her dwelling.

She must have been extremely expeditious in her cookery. A faint and hungry man, as was Saul—"for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night"—must have found it exceedingly trying to wait until a calf was slaughtered and cooked, and fresh bread baked, and all this after midnight.[2]

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[1] I Sam. xxviii. 7–25.

[2] I Sam. xxviii. 20, 24, 25.

With the Bedawîn it is nearly universal to cook the meat immediately after it is butchered, and to bake fresh bread for every meal. Visit any Arab sheikh, for example, whose tent is now in the valley below us, and you will witness the entire process. A sheep or calf will be brought and killed before you, thrust instanter into the great caldron which stands ready on the fire to receive it, and, ere you are aware, it will reappear on a large copper tray, with a heap of bûrgûl, cracked wheat, or of boiled rice and leben, sour milk. In Cincinnati, a hog walks into a narrow passage on his own feet, and comes out at the other end bacon, ham, and half a dozen other commodities; at the sheikh's camp, it is a calf or sheep that walks past you into the caldron, and comes forth a smoking stew for dinner.

It would seem that this killing, cooking, and eating in rapid succession is a very old custom. Abraham, and Gideon, and Manoah, and many others besides the witch of Endôr, were expert in getting up such impromptu repasts; and our Saviour has given it a proverbial expression in the "fatted calf" of the parable of the "prodigal son."

Not only is this true, but amongst the Bedawîn Arabs the killing of a sheep, calf, or kid in honor of a visitor is required by their laws of hospitality, and the neglect of it is keenly resented. They have a dozen caustic terms of contempt for the sheikh who neglects to honor his guest with the usual dabbîhah, sacrifice, as it is universally called—a name suggestive of the religious rite of hospitality as practised in ancient times by the patriarchs, and frequently confirmed by a solemn oath and covenant.

Since leaving Endôr, we have been travelling for less than an hour westward along the northern base of Jebel ed Dŭhy, and are now approaching the little village of Nain, or Nein, as it is now called, and still, like the former, retaining its ancient name.

Nain! a site rendered forever memorable for the restoration to life there of the widow's son by our blessed Lord.[1]

Nain was once a village of considerable importance, now it is little more than a shapeless cluster of ruins, amongst which dwell a few families of ignorant and fanatical Moslems. The site was so overgrown with weeds and tall grass when I was here last, that it

[1] Luke vii. 11–18.

was difficult to find an open space from which to take a photograph. It is in striking accord with the one Biblical incident in the history of Nain that renders it dear to the Christian heart, that about the only remains of antiquity are tombs. These are cut in the rock, and are situated on the hill-side to the east of the village.

NEIN—NAIN.

It must have been in that direction that "the only son of his mother" was being carried out to his burial on that affecting occasion when He, who is "the Resurrection and the Life," was approaching the town. Seeing the funeral procession and the weeping mother, "he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not." Then, touching "the bier, he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up. And he delivered him to his mother."[1]

Let us resume our ride, and descend to the plain of Esdraelon.

What is the name of that ruin which we now see near the western base of Jebel ed Dŭhy?

El Fûleh, the bean, where are the remains of the Crusading castle of Faba, occupied by the Knights Hospitallers and Templars, and captured by Saladin in 1187, after the disastrous battle of Hattîn. The castle of Faba was square, with a high wall and deep ditch. There was no water inside, but directly below it small fountains ooze out of the ground, sufficient in quantity for the demands of the garrison, which could not have been a very large one. The village of el Fûleh, like that of 'Afûleh, west of it, is now deserted, though both were inhabited when I first passed this way.

When the French invaded Syria, in 1799, General Kleber's advance was posted in the plain of Esdraelon near el Fûleh, and there occurred the famous battle of Mount Tabor. With less than two thousand men he sustained the attack of the Syrian army, amounting to at least twenty-five thousand men, and fought from sunrise to mid-day. Bonaparte advanced to his support from Acre, and no sooner had he come in sight and fired a shot over the plain than the Turks fled precipitately. Several thousand were killed, and many drowned in the river of Debûrieh, which then inundated a part of the plain. Bonaparte, it is said, dined at Nazareth, and returned the same day to Acre. Many years ago I spent a night at esh Shajerah, a village in the oak woods north of Tabor, and found several old men there who remembered the battle of Kleber, and the wild rout of the Turks.

The Bedawîn now resort to the fountains of el Fûleh with their flocks and camels, and it was to secure this privilege that they sacked and destroyed the castle. Their system of desolation is worked out after this fashion: They pitch their tents in the vicinity of a village, and in such numbers as to bid defiance to the inhabitants. Of course, their camels and flocks roam over the unfenced plain, and devour a large part of the grain while growing; and when it is ripe, they either steal it, or compel the farmers to present them with a heavy percentage as the price of their protection. From the village itself chickens, eggs, sheep, cows, and even horses disappear, and can never be recovered. Many of the inhabitants soon move off to escape from these annoyances, and the village being thereby weakened, the Arabs provoke a quarrel; some one is wounded or killed, and then the place is sacked and burnt. The end aimed at is now reached, and the land belongs thenceforth to the lawless Ishmaelite; and by the same process the whole of Esdraelon will soon be abandoned to them, unless the present Government bestirs itself to restrain these ruthless marauders.

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[1] Luke vii. 13–15.

To prepare the way for an intelligible conversation concerning some of the Biblical scenes in which they have figured so largely, it is necessary to describe this noble plain and "that ancient river, the river Kishon," somewhat fully.

The plain of Esdraelon takes its general name from the royal city or valley of Jezreel, of which it is the Greek form given in the Apocrypha.[1] It is also called in the Bible the valley of Megiddo, and by Josephus the great plain.[2] The Arabs have forgotten its ancient name and Biblical associations, and it is known to them only as Merj Ibn 'Âmir, the plain of the son of 'Âmir. As we first saw it from the heights above Jenîn, you will remember, it presented a somewhat triangular appearance, widening out westward by the falling back of the hills of Samaria on the south, and the mountains of Galilee on the north. Its eastern side from Jenîn northward to the hills below Nazareth is about fifteen miles. The northern side, formed by the foothills of Galilee, and extending westward from Mount Tabor to the pass opening into the plain of Acre, through which the Kishon flows, is about twelve miles; while the range of Carmel and the hills of Samaria bound it on the south-west and south, the side of its greatest length, or for about twenty miles. There is "the valley of Megiddo." Mount Gilboa and the ridge of Little Hermon divide the plain on the east into three irregular branches or smaller plains. The most northern extends round the base of Tabor; the central, descending to the Jordan by Beisân, is "the valley of Jezreel;" the southern is merely the extension of the plain southward into the range of Gilboa.

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[1] Josh. xvii. 16; Judith iii. 9; iv. 6.

[2] Zech. xii. 11; Ant. xx. vi. 1.

MERJ IBN 'AMIR—PLAIN OF ESDRAELON.

Esdraelon is by no means the level plain it appears to be as seen from Tabor or the top of Jebel ed Dŭhy. The western part has a decided dip towards the Mediterranean, while portions of it at different places roll up in long, undulating swells, like great waves of the sea. The soil is surpassingly fertile. Checkered patches of wheat, barley, maize or Indian-corn, millet, sesame, and even cotton, with broad, dark-brown strips of fallow land intervening, cover the surface; and along the hill-sides here and there are groves of fig and olive trees descending into the plain. The few palms at Jenîn, the fruit-trees, and the prickly-pear hedges surrounding most of the villages on the heights, add variety to the scene; still not a quarter of the plain is under cultivation, and the remainder is utterly desolate.

There are apparently no inhabited villages throughout its entire length and breadth.

That is true, and there is scarcely any trace of antiquity upon it, particularly in the central and western part of it; and there never were any very substantial buildings in its agricultural villages, I suppose. The houses appear to have been made of unburnt brick, and, of course, it is useless to look for them in our day. From the nature of the country and its relative position it was always subject to invasion. The plain, therefore, was mainly cultivated by those who resided in towns upon its border, and there you will find villages and ancient remains, as at Iksâl, Debûrieh, Nein, Endôr, Beisân, Sôlam, Zer'in, Jenîn, Ta'annŭk, Lejjûn, Tell Kâmôn, and many other sites. At a place now called el Mezra'ah there are many sarcophagi of a most antique design, yet there is no other trace of an extinct city near it; and the soil amongst the sarcophagi is ploughed and sowed like the rest of the plain. There are also other sites where nothing but the tombs of those who lived there remain to tell the story of their inhabitants.

The borders of Esdraelon are rich in Biblical sites, and the scenes they suggest are of historic interest, alike to Jew and Gentile. On the east is Jezreel and Shunem, En-dor and Nain, the mountains of Gilboa and the rocky ridge of Little Hermon; on the north is Tabor and Nazareth, and the so-called Mount of Precipitation; and westward and southward is the Kishon and Carmel, Megiddo and Taanach, and many places of lesser note, each with a story of its own.

Esdraelon has been called "the battle-field of Palestine;" but it should be borne in mind that none of the battles of the Conquest under Joshua were fought here, and that most of the victories of David were near the plains of Philistia. The defeat of Sisera, it is true, occurred on this plain, but the victory of Gideon over the Midianites, and the overthrow of Saul's army by the Philistines, were achieved in the valley of Jezreel and on the heights of Gilboa. Ahaziah, King of Judah, when mortally wounded by command of Jehu, fled across this plain "to Megiddo, and died there;" and, nearly three centuries later, Josiah, King of Israel, was defeated and slain at the same place by Pharaoh-necho, then on his march against the Assyrians.

Almost in our time, near el Fûleh, the French utterly routed the Turks; but with these three exceptions—the victory of Barak, the defeat of Israel, and the rout of the Turks—Esdraelon has been more the camping-ground for invading hosts, the highway for opposing armies, than the battle-field of contending nations. The ancient Canaanites, with chariots of iron, have traversed it; Midianites and Amalekites, with their vast herds, have desolated it; and the Philistines, the Jews, the Egyptians, the Syrians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Crusaders, the Saracens, the French—all have passed over it, and gone on to victory or defeat. To this day it is exposed to devastating excursions from the Bedawîn, those modern "children of the East," who come up from beyond Jordan "as grasshoppers for multitude."

In my youthful days I was familiar with old maps which made the Kishon run in a broad, straight canal from the Bay of Acre to the Jordan. Of course, that is absurd in itself, and rendered still more so by the well-ascertained fact that the Jordan east of Tabor is seven or eight hundred feet lower than the Mediterranean.

That old theory, however, is not without a semblance of fact to rest upon. The winter torrents, which come down from the regions of Jelbôn on Gilboa east of Jenîn, and from Debûrieh west of Tabor, are the most distant branches of the Kishon; but the farthest perennial source of that famous river is, as you will remember, the fountain of Jenîn itself. The stream from that fountain is re-enforced on its way northward and westward by the waters of Ta'annŭk, Lejjûn, and other rivulets from the hills of Samaria and the wadys of Carmel, and is joined by the streams from around Tabor and the foothills of Galilee, as also by the springs and marshes in the lower or western part of the plain itself; but they are not strong enough to keep the river running during the summer and autumn. I have crossed the bed of the Mukŭtt'a or Kishon, even after it enters the plain of Acre, in the early part of April, when it was quite dry.

The strictly permanent Kishon is one of the shortest rivers in the world. We will find its source in the large fountains of es Sa'îdîyeh, or Sa'adeh, not more than three miles east of Haifa. They flow out from the very roots of Carmel, almost on a level with the sea, and the water is brackish. They form a deep, broad stream at once, which creeps sluggishly through an impracticable marsh to the sea; and it is this stream which the traveller crosses on the shore. Of course it is largely swollen during the great rains of winter by the longer river of el Mukŭtt'a from the interior. Both are then much easier to find than to get over. I once crossed diagonally through Esdraelon from Semûnieh to Wady el Kŭsab, and had no little trouble with its bottomless mire and tangled grass.

In common with others, I have carefully sought for the watershed of the plain, and, until lately, without success.

Once I went directly across from Debûrieh to Nain, and between those two villages the plain is so perfectly level that I could not determine the exact line where the water would flow east and where west, nor could the eye detect the slope either way except at a considerable distance. A large amount of water descends in winter from the oak-clad hills north and west of Tabor, and enters the plain between Isâl and Debûrieh. It might well happen, therefore, that this flat space would be so flooded that a part of the water would find its way westward to the Kishon, and another part descend along the base of Tabor into Wady Sherrâr, and thence into the Jordan; and I have had ocular proof that this it actually does.

Being detained in Nazareth by a very heavy storm, our company set out, during a temporary lull, for a visit to Endôr and Nain. Descending into the plain at Iksâl by one of the most frightful of ridable paths, we crossed Esdraelon directly for Endôr towards the south-east. The plain was all flooded with water, and spongy; but my search for the water-shed was successfully ended. All the water that came foaming off those hills east of Iksâl ran directly into Wady Sherrâr, while all west of that village—and there was plenty of it—flowed westward to the Kishon or the Mukŭtt'a. So, also, the drainings of Jebel ed Dŭhy from about Endôr went to the stream of the Sherrâr and the Jordan eastward, while those to the west of it joined the Kishon. A line drawn from Iksâl to Endôr, therefore, passes directly along the summit-level and water-shed between the Kishon and the Sherrâr. Wady Jâlûd, however, on the south side of Jebel ed Dŭhy, extends much farther to the west, draining the central part of Esdraelon into the valley of Jezreel. Those two streams, the Jâlûd and the Kishon, therefore, interlap one another for several miles, the arms of the latter, north and south of Jezreel, carrying the waters from the mountains to the Mediterranean, while the Jâlûd takes those from the centre into the Jordan.

Along the southern and south-western margin of the plain are two places of Biblical importance, Ta'annŭk and Lejjûn, doubtless the ancient Taanach and Megiddo, though there are conflicting opinions in regard to the site of the latter. It is generally believed, also, that Lejjûn marks the site of the Roman Legio, but that, too, has been questioned by Raumer, who would identify it with Maximianopolis as well.

Dr. Robinson says: "The remains of ancient Legio are not extensive. 'Amongst the rubbish are the foundations of two or three buildings, with limestone columns mostly worn away; and another with eight or ten polished granite columns still remaining, and others of limestone amongst them.'[1] In the foundations of the ruin at the brook are two marble columns with Corinthian capitals, and several of granite, all mingled indiscriminately. We noticed also a column standing before the door of a mill. All these circumstances, with the name Lejjûn, serve to fix this spot indubitably as that of the ancient Legio."[2]

The remains of Khân el Lejjûn, with two or three mills close by, one of which is under the old bridge that spans Nahr Lejjûn, are the only modern indications, there being no inhabited houses even in the neighborhood.

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[1] Rev. S. Wolcott, Bib. Sacra.

[2] Rob. Res. vol. iii. p. 118.

The most recent theory about the site of Megiddo transfers it far away eastward to a site called Mejedd'a, near Beisân, in the valley of Jezreel. Lieutenant Conder has written an elaborate article to establish this identification; but however plausible some of his arguments may be, I still adhere to the present site, and think that we find the Biblical Megiddo at el Lejjûn, and that there, also, is the site of the Roman Legio.

Though within the territorial limits of Issachar, Megiddo was assigned to Manasseh. Like in many other places on and around this plain, the Hebrews "could not drive out the inhabitants, but the Canaanites would dwell in the land."[1] Megiddo is repeatedly mentioned in connection with Taanach, implying that the two cities were close together, and the present sites are not over four miles distant from each other. That vicinity is specially celebrated for the victory of Barak over Sisera, and "by the waters of Megiddo," where "the kings came and fought," the Kishon itself may be intended; as Nahr Lejjûn, which descends into the plain near the khân, is a powerful tributary of the Mukŭtt'a in that direction.[2] Solomon probably fortified the place, and there one of the twelve officers of his household may have resided.[3] It was at Megiddo that King Ahaziah, fleeing from before Jehu, died of his wounds, and there the good King Josiah was defeated and slain by Pharaoh-necho.[4] The Apostle John having been a native of Galilee, and acquainted with the natural features and ancient history of "the great plain," it has been supposed that he refers in the Apocalypse to the scene of these battles, in illustration of that final contest between the hosts of good and evil. "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon," that is, "the hill or city of Megiddo."[5]

We have now crossed the highway from Jenîn which leads on to Nazareth and Upper Galilee.

Is the battle-field of Barak and Sisera visible from here?

Distinctly, if we adopt the identification of Lejjûn with Megiddo.

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[1] Josh. xvii. 11, 12.

[2] Judges v. 19.

[3] 1 Kings iv. 12; ix. 15.

[4] 2 Kings ix. 27; xxiii. 29, 30.

[5] Rev. xvi. 16.

On the border of the plain, about half a mile north of Khân el Lejjûn, you can distinguish the artificial Tell el Mutsellim, the Hill of the Governor; and although there are now no ancient remains upon it, still, in former times, it may have been fortified. The tell commands a magnificent view of the great plain to the mountains of Gilboa eastward, to Tabor on the north-east, to the hills of Galilee, the range of Carmel, while at its base run "the waters of Megiddo" to join the Kishon, on its way westward through the plain to the sea at Haifa. Behind Tell el Mutsellim, in a recess of the hills, is Lejjûn or Megiddo, and a short distance to the south-east is Tell Ta'annûk, upon the slope of which Taanach is supposed to have stood. On the plain in front of those two tells, "in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo the kings came and fought," and there is the scene of the battle between Barak and Sisera.

Sisera and all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him, were encamped on the plain. Barak, accompanied by the heroic Deborah, with their ten thousand courageous children of Naphtali, and children of Zebulun, from Kedesh, occupied Mount Tabor. On the morning of that eventful day, probably long before it was light, Deborah set the little army in motion with the energetic command and animating promise, "Up; for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the Lord gone out before thee?"[1] Rapidly they descend the mountain, cross over below Nain into the valley of Jezreel, then incline to the left to avoid the low and marshy ground, and by the first faint light of the morning they are upon the sleeping host of the Canaanites.

This assault, wholly unexpected, threw them into instant and irrecoverable confusion. But half awake, the whole army fled in dismay down the plain, hotly pursued by the victorious Barak. No time was allowed them to recover from their panic. God also fought against them: "They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera."[2] Josephus adds that a storm from the east beat furiously in the faces of the Canaanites, but only on the backs of the Jews. The storm is required by both the narrative of the action and the song of victory. It was to this, I suppose, that Deborah alluded, "Is not the Lord gone out before thee?" and this it certainly was which swelled the Kishon, so that it swept away and drowned the flying host, for it never could do that except during a great rain.

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[1] Judges iv. 14.

[2] Judges v. 20.

The army of Sisera naturally sought to regain the strongly-fortified "Harosheth of the Gentiles," from which they had marched up to their camping-ground a short time before. The narrative of the battle leads us to seek it somewhere down the Kishon, for only in that direction would they fly from an attack coming from the north-east. That place was, I suppose, at the lower end of the narrow pass through which the Kishon issues out of Esdraelon into the plain of Acre, and this was their only practicable line of retreat. If you look down the Kishon, you can see a large double tell at the farther end of that pass. It is now called Tell Harothîeh, and marks the site, I doubt not, of the old "Harosheth of the Gentiles." The present village of that name is in a recess of the hills, a short distance to the east of the tell.

The victorious Barak was behind them; on their left were the hills of Samaria, in the hand of their enemies; on their right was the swollen river and the marshes of eth Thôrah; they had no alternative but to make for the narrow pass which led from Esdraelon to Harosheth. That part of the plain is perfectly level, and I can tell you from experience that in wet seasons it is extremely muddy; and then the Kishon causes great tribulation to all wayfarers. Rarely do they get over it without some of their animals sticking fast in its oozy bottom. You observe that the hills of Samaria bend round to the base of Carmel, while those of Galilee do the same on the opposite side, leaving a vale between them for the Kishon. That vale, however, becomes more and more narrow, until within the pass it is only a few rods wide. There horses, chariots, and men became mixed in horrible confusion, jostling and treading down one another; and the river, swifter and deeper than above, runs zigzag from side to side, until, just before it reaches Tell Harothîeh, it dashes against the perpendicular base of Carmel. There is no longer any possibility of avoiding it, and, rank upon rank, the flying host plunge madly in, those behind crushing those before. "The river of Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon."

Such were the conditions of this battle and battle-field that we can follow it out to the dire catastrophe. We only need to know where Harosheth was; and that it could not have been very far from the camp is evident, for the Hebrews pursued them to it. They had before the battle marched some ten or twelve miles, and we cannot suppose that they could pursue an enemy more than eight or ten miles farther. Exactly in the line of the necessary retreat, and about eight miles from Megiddo, at the entrance of the pass to Esdraelon from the plain of Acre, as we have seen, is Tell el Harothîeh, which is nearly the Arabic form of the Hebrew Harosheth. That tell, situated just below the point where the Kishon beats against the rocky base of Carmel, leaves no room even for a foot-path. A castle there would effectually command the pass up the vale of the Kishon into Esdraelon, and such a castle there probably was at that time. It is still covered with remains of walls and buildings.

The village of the same name is now on the other side of the river, a short distance higher up, and of course, if in the same place then, it would have been nearer the battle-field. It was probably called "Harosheth of the Gentiles," or nations, because it belonged to those Gentiles of Acre and the neighboring plains, which we know, from Judges i. 31, the Hebrews could not subdue; and I believe that Sisera pitched between Taanach and Megiddo, because, as is stated in the passage from Judges, those towns were still in the hands of the Canaanites.

It may be objected that our supposition makes the authority of Jabin extend very far. It does; but, instead of weakening, this fact is rather confirmatory of our views. Hazor, situated somewhere on the mountains of Naphtali, we are distinctly informed by Joshua, was the head of all those nations who assembled at the waters of Merom. Amongst them were the kings of Dor, of Taanach, and Megiddo, and very likely of Acre itself. As Hazor was rebuilt, and another King Jabin of the same dynasty now reigned in it, the probabilities are great that he would still be acknowledged as the "head" of all those Canaanitish cities. Moreover, Jabin could only use his nine hundred chariots of iron on the plains, such as those of Acre and Esdraelon, and no better position for his horses and chariots could be found than around Tell Harothîeh, nor a more commanding position taken by his chief captain, Sisera.

But if Harosheth was at Harothîeh, how comes it to pass that Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, is found so near the battle-field that Sisera could light down from his chariot and flee to her tent? We are told in the narrative that their home was near Kedesh, which is two days' travel to the north-east.

Even this, when carefully examined, confirms, I think, the identification. It is also mentioned that "Heber the Kenite, which was of the children of Hobab, had severed himself from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim, which is by Kedesh;"[1] and I suppose the object of this brief notice thus thrown into the narrative is, in reality, to account for the appearance of Jael at all on this scene of action. The other Kenites were settled in the hill-country of Judah, not far from Hebron. It is because Heber did settle near Kedesh that "there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite," for Hazor was only a few miles from Kedesh.

An incident which happened to me may explain why Heber was found upon this plain at the time of the battle. With a guide from Nazareth, I once crossed the lower part of Esdraelon in the winter. It was then full of Arab tents, and at first I felt a little nervous, but my guide assured me there was no danger, for he was well acquainted with those Arabs. Their home was in the mountains north of Nazareth, towards Safed, and they only came down there to pass the cold months of winter. This was the very thing, I suppose, that Heber and his tribe of Kenites did in the days of Jael. None of the Bedawîn women I saw that day seemed at all heroic, though some of them looked as if they could drive a nail into the temple of a sleeping enemy.

Heber probably migrated to that distant region for the simple reason that it was under the government of his ally Jabin, and if his tent was pitched there it implies that the battle occurred in the winter or early spring, for only then would he and his tribe be found there. Now this is nowhere stated in just so many words, but in the song of victory it says that "the river of Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon," and this it could not do except in the rainy season. It is interesting to notice how all parts of this narrative, even to its remote and incidental implications, corroborate each other.

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[1] Judges iv. 11.

With regard to the deed of Jael, which was so highly praised by Deborah, Dr. Kitto, after presenting that act and the supposed motives of the actor in the most unfavorable light, sums up the whole thus: "It was a most treacherous and cruel murder, wanting all those extenuations which were applicable to the assassination of King Eglon by Ehud." I feel unwilling to accept this summary and unfavorable decision.

We need by no means take for granted that because the Kenites were not at war with the tyrannical Jabin, that therefore they were treated with justice by him. In the same neighborhood at the present day, the tribes of settled Arabs—and the Kenites were of this class—are often cruelly oppressed by the sheikhs of the districts where they reside. They are at peace with them, however, through fear, and from inability to protect themselves, or to throw off the galling yoke. It is nearly certain that in those lawless times the defenceless Kenites would be oppressed by Jabin, and would sigh for and gladly embrace any opportunity to escape from his intolerable bondage. Their deliverer, therefore, would be esteemed a patriot and hero, not a murderer.

If it must be supposed that Jabin was a kind friend and just protector of the Kenites, it does not follow that Jael might not have had special reasons to fear and hate Sisera himself. He had the command of the immediate neighborhood where the Kenites were encamped, and, unless he differed from modern commanders of Eastern armies, he would most certainly abuse them, or allow them to be insulted without redress by his rude retainers. Jael might have thus been injured in the highest degree, if not by Sisera, by some of his lewd captains. Or there may have been a recent blood-feud between their tribe and that man or his family, which not only justified Jael, according to the law of retribution, but rendered it obligatory upon her, and every one of the tribe, to take revenge upon their common enemy, as is done even to this day amongst the Druses and Bedawîn Arabs.

We are not to take for granted that the fantastic laws of the Bedawîn in regard to the asylum of the tent were in force amongst those settled Kenites. Those notions are carried to such a pitch in some tribes that a man is obliged to protect the murderer of his father if he succeeds in reaching the tent; but the settled Arabs know no such laws, and I do not believe that the Kenites did.

It may be assumed as nearly certain that Jael would not have ventured upon this daring act unless she knew that her husband and her whole tribe would not only justify, but rejoice in it as a righteous retribution upon their oppressor, and as the means of escape from an intolerable bondage, against which they were watching for an opportunity to revolt.

On the nearly incredible supposition that neither the Kenites as a tribe nor Jael as an individual had any cause of complaint against Sisera, we may fairly conclude that they were believers in Israel's God, and friends of his people. This their whole history confirms. They must, therefore, have been deeply grieved at the cruel oppression which their brethren in faith and worship suffered from Sisera. In their defenceless condition they may not have dared to take sides openly against Jabin, but in heart they were with the oppressed Israelites, and regarded it as a duty to help them to the utmost of their power. The total overthrow of the Canaanites offered the wished-for opportunity, and Jael boldly availed herself of it, "and with the hammer she smote Sisera."

The reason why it is mentioned that the Kenites were neutral in this war was not to give the idea that they were under any obligation to take sides with Sisera, or to protect him if defeated, nor even to account for the fact that Sisera fled to Heber's tent. He may, and probably had little enough reason to claim this protection. But it was necessary to make the statement about the Kenites, as we have before said, in order to account for their being down on Esdraelon at all when the army of Sisera was there. It deserves also to be remembered that if the Kenites had attempted to shield and aid Sisera after his defeat, they would have rendered themselves partisans in the war on the losing side, and might have been treated as enemies by the now victorious Israelites. On the whole, therefore, I conclude that if all the circumstances and influences which impelled Jael to the daring act, and sustained her in it, were known, we should find that she violated neither the customs of her people, nor the laws of war then in force, nor the abstract and greater laws of righteousness, by thus destroying the enemy of God's people and the oppressor of her own, who from necessity sought in her tent an asylum to which he had no right, and the granting of which might have involved her and her whole family in ruin.

Under these impressions, I can join with Deborah in celebrating the deed and the actor:

"Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be; blessed shall she be above women in the tent. He asked water, and she gave him milk; she brought forth butter in a lordly dish. She put her hand to the nail, and her right hand to the workmen's hammer; and with the hammer she smote Sisera, she smote off his head, when she had pierced and stricken through his temples. At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down: at her feet he bowed, he fell: where he bowed, there he fell down dead. The mother of Sisera looked out at a window, and cried through the lattice, Why is his chariot so long in coming? why tarry the wheels of his chariots? Her wise ladies answered her, yea, she returned answer to herself, Have they not sped? have they not divided the prey; to every man a damsel or two; to Sisera a prey of divers colours, a prey of divers colours of needle-work, of divers colours of needle-work on both sides, meet for the necks of them that take the spoil? So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord: but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might."[1] There is nothing, ancient or modern, more beautiful, appropriate, or sublime than this close of Deborah's triumphal ode. No gloss, paraphrase, or comment can add to its graces.

There are a few allusions, however, in it which may be better understood by brief explanations. The "nail" which Jael took was doubtless a tent-pin similar to those now in use called watted, sharp-pointed and of hard wood; the "hammer" the ordinary mallet used by the tent-dwelling Arabs. It is not necessary to suppose that either of them was of iron, as nail and hammer would imply. Josephus, however, says that the nail was of iron. There are iron pins, but they are chiefly used to tether horses. How he got the information does not appear, nor does he give his authority for the vastness of Jabin's army: "Three hundred thousand footmen, ten thousand horsemen, with no fewer than three thousand chariots."[1]

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[1] Judges v. 24–30.

There is a curious use of the word nail in the twenty-third verse of the twenty-second chapter of Isaiah, which must also refer to wooden watteds, I suppose, for it is the same Hebrew word: "I will fasten him as a nail [yathed] in a sure place;" and again, in the twenty-fifth verse, this yathed, "fastened in the sure place, shall be removed, and be cut down, and fall."

It was a peg driven into the wall, upon which to hang clothes and household utensils. There is significance in the statement that it should be made fast in a sure place, because, in modern houses even, those pins are driven into the wall through the plaster, and are anything but steady or secure. There is a reference to the same thing, and the same Hebrew word, in Zechariah x. 4: "Out of him came forth the corner, out of him the nail"—yathed or peg, which gives an intelligible idea to the expression of the prophet, since the tent-pin, or watted, is essential to the stability and safety of the Arab tent.

Again, we are not to suppose that Jael brought Sisera butter to drink. Neither the ancients nor the modern Orientals make butter, as we understand the word, and what takes the place of it is never used as a beverage. Butter is the exponent of milk in the other member of the parallelism, showing that curdled milk, or leben, was meant, and this makes a most cooling and refreshing drink, invariably offered to the thirsty traveller by the Bedawîn.

The entire soliloquy of Sisera's mother is worked out with admirable skill and truthfulness. When on the lofty Tell Harothîeh, which commands the view of the pass up the Kishon, and out into Esdraelon towards Megiddo, I could fancy her sitting at a latticed window, and impatiently looking up the wady. She knew that a battle was to take place, was certain of victory, and longed not so much to see her son as to grasp the spoils. Knowing that those lewd warriors would chiefly value the fair damsels of the Hebrews, she mentions them first, but does not appear to relish that sort of

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[1] Ant. v. v. I.

"prey" for her house, and therefore does not give any to Sisera—most mothers can understand and sympathize with her—but she feasted her imagination with the goodly needle-work of divers colors which her son was to lay at her feet. This is eminently Oriental and feminine; and the childish repetition of "divers colors" is all the more striking in an ode distinguished for abrupt exclamation, rapid narrative, and conciseness of style and diction.

Deborah was certainly a remarkable woman, prophetess, poet, judge, and warrior. Though her residence was near Jerusalem, between Ramah and Bethel, yet we meet her far north, at Kedesh in Naphtali, with Barak, who was of that city. As inspired guide to Israel, her patriotic zeal would lead her wherever she could be of service to her oppressed people. She dwelt in a tent, I suppose, like her heroine Jael, under the tree near Bethel, in Mount Ephraim, called "the palm-tree of Deborah."[1]

From such expressions it would seem that trees were as rare in Palestine then as they are now, or we should not so often read of *the* oak, *the* terebinth, *the* palm-tree, of this or that important place or event. If trees were abundant, such a designation would signify nothing, and would not have been employed.

And one other thought about such remarkable trees. This country abounds in them. We have sacred trees, and trees that are inhabited by jân, or evil spirits; and we have single trees scattered over the land covered with bits of rags from the garments of passing villagers, hung up as acknowledgments, or as deprecatory offerings and charms; and we find beautiful clumps of oak-trees sacred to beings called Jacob's daughters. These are doubtless relics of most ancient superstitions; and in the fact that the patriarchs and prophets lived, and prophesied, and were buried under such trees, we find, I imagine, the origin of those curious customs, and the prevailing belief and propitiatory efficacy.

Around the north-western side of Esdraelon are clustered a number of interesting sites which we may notice in passing. That tell with a village upon it is Jubbâta; and directly north of it, distant half an hour, is Semûnieh, on a large tell, partly hid in a recess of the mountain. In the plain between the two Josephus fought one of his battles with the Romans. Semûnieh is entirely deserted, but there is an excellent fountain of water at the south-west base of the tell; and the traveller along that road in summer will be thankful to know where he can slake his thirst and fill his "bottle." Two miles west of Semûnieh is Jeîdah, on an old site full of rock tombs, and surrounded with oak glades and rich vales of exquisite beauty. West of it is the ruined village el Kŭskŭs; and in the woods north and east of it are Zebdeh, Beît Lahm, and Um el 'Amad, all ancient, and some of them historical. That whole region is beautiful, yet deserted; as "in the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the inhabitants of the villages ceased, the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through byways."[1] The present state of the country is no novelty, and Deborah's description is equally applicable to the condition of this same part of Palestine in modern times.

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[1] Judges iv. 5.

How do you account for this extraordinary fact?

The cause is sufficiently obvious to any one acquainted with the country. Whenever the Government is weak or paralyzed, the public highways are immediately unsafe. Wandering Arabs quickly cross over the Jordan, and plunder, rob, and kill at pleasure. "Then the inhabitants of the villages cease," for they are obliged to flee into the towns for protection. I have passed through large districts where every village was deserted, and have repeatedly been obliged to wander in by-paths to escape from such wild robbers. Again, when the pressure of the Government is lifted off by local rebellion or foreign war, neighborhood feuds break out, and the surrounding districts are temporarily abandoned; and though the inhabitants generally return after the quarrel is over, yet in many cases the conflict is so fierce and protracted that the villages often are finally deserted, and soon become shapeless heaps, overgrown with briers and thorns. There the owl dozes by day and whoops by night, and foxes and jackals hide until the shadows of evening allow them to creep out, and startle the solemn silence by their unearthly howl. Timidly they climb to the top of the crumbling walls, gaze cautiously around for enemies, and then give forth their long, loud wail, which is quickly answered from other ruins and distant rocks—

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[1] Judges v. 6, 7.

a dismal chorus, as though the ghosts of the dead were bewailing the desolation of their former dwellings. Thus it was in the days of Shamgar and of Jael, until Deborah arose, a mother in Israel, to drive back the invader, punish the lawless, and bless the land with safety and peace. It is wonderful to see how, under a wise and beneficent regime, matters speedily change for the better. Then "they that ride on white asses, delivered from the noise of archers, in the places of drawing water, rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord, even the righteous acts toward the inhabitants of his villages in Israel: then shall the people of the Lord go down to the gates" in safety.[1] The picture is true to life, especially around Nâblus and Jenîn, when the country is disturbed by private feud or open rebellion; the latter place being in the very neighborhood where Deborah sang her unique song of triumph after Barak's glorious victory.

On that bold promontory of Carmel directly facing us is a place called el Mŭhrakah, the supposed site of the great sacrifice offered by Elijah. The shapeless ruins of el Mansûrah are on a lower terrace to the south-east of it, and similar ruins are below on the north side of the mountain. Wady el Milh passes southward round the end of Carmel, and through it, I believe, ran the ancient Roman road to Dor and Cæsarea. The large tell on the east side of Wady el Milh is Tell Kâmôn, often mentioned by ancient geographers and itineraries. This lower end of Esdraelon is not more than six miles wide, and much of it is too flat and wet for cultivation; but the Bedawîn delight in it, and it is even now dotted with their black tabernacles. Overgrown as it is with tall thistles and long grass, it is the favorite haunt of the gazelle. The solemn stork, too, frequents the more marshy parts of the plain, and adds picturesqueness to this rather monotonous scene.

The great tell, which, from our position, seems to close up the entrance to the plain entirely, is called Tell el Kŭssîs, mound of the priest; a name probably commemorative of the slaughter of Baal's priests near its base. The hills of Galilee are clothed, down to the bank of the river, with a forest of oak, terebinth, mock-orange, and other trees and bushes. Hour after hour you wander delighted through those lovely woods, over hills and through wadys quite up to the plain of Buttauf.

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[1] Judges v. 10, 11.

We are now passing away from the scene of Barak's great battle with Sisera; and yet this same neighborhood witnessed another contest more remarkable and vastly more important and impressive than the overthrow of that oppressor of Israel. It occurred during the reign of the wicked King Ahab, and his more wicked Queen Jezebel; and the scene shifts from Esdraelon to Carmel, and from plain to mountain and mountain to plain, in rapid succession. Elijah, the Tishbite, is the principal actor. Jezebel had successfully employed the power and patronage of the government to corrupt the faith of Israel, and the whole kingdom was overrun with the priests of Baal, that abomination of the Zidonians, while his idolatrous temples reared their insulting heads in every part of the land.

To arrest this ruinous revolt, the Lord interposed by a series of awful judgments and stupendous miracles. At the prayer of the prophet the heavens were shut up for three years and six months, so that there was neither dew nor rain during all those years.[1] Near the close of this prolonged drought the king said to Obadiah, the governor of his house, "Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks: peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts. So Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself." The latter went westward from Jezreel to the marshy grounds near Carmel, at the bottom of Esdraelon, and there Elijah met him, and said, "Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here." The good man was terrified at the thought of carrying such a message to the enraged king, and exclaimed, "As the Lord thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee." Elijah replied, "As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him to day."

Ahab seems to have been near at hand, for he quickly obeyed the summons; and when he saw Elijah he exclaimed, in anger, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" "I have not troubled Israel," was the reply of the Tishbite, "but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim. Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel unto Mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table." The wicked but weak-minded king sank before the daring servant of God, his more wicked and resolute wife not being by his side. He hastily gathered the people to a remarkable and well-known spot on the eastern end of Carmel, where sacrifice had been offered to Jehovah in ancient times.

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[1] I Kings xvii. I; xviii. I; Luke iv. 25.

Never before was there such a meeting as this, never such a momentous question to be discussed, such a mighty controversy to be settled. "Elijah came unto all the people, and said, If the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him." But the people, conscience-smitten, yet afraid of the king, "answered him not a word." Then the prophet, to compel a choice, proposed the test of sacrifice, "and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God." The irresolute multitude ventured to approve; the king could not resist; the priests dared not refuse. Quickly the victims are upon the altars, and the priests "called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice, nor any that answered," and they leaped in frantic despair upon the altar. Then "Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked." The poor priests, goaded to madness by this scorching irony, "cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them." But in vain. "There was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded." Thus they continued "until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice."

Then Elijah "repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down," placing "twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob." A trench was dug round it, the wood arranged, the sacrifice placed upon it, and all was ready for the great decision; but, to make the trial doubly convincing, barrel after barrel of water was poured on until it "ran round about the altar and filled the trench." Then comes the solemn invocation, "Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench." And the whole multitude "fell on their faces," crying out, "The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God."

And Elijah said to the people, "Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape." They did so, and "brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there," probably near the base of Tell el Kŭssîs, which you see at the mouth of the valley. Then "Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat, and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain." Elijah himself returned to the top of Carmel, cast himself upon the ground, put his face between his knees, and prayed—prayed earnestly for the rain; but it came not until his servant had gone up to the top and looked out on the Mediterranean seven times. Then "a little cloud, like a man's hand," was seen to rise out of the sea, and Elijah sent word to the king, "Prepare thy chariot, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not." In the mean while "the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain." Thus the long drought of three years and a half was brought to a close; but the work of the prophet on this most eventful day was not yet ended. "And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel. And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel."[1] This is the last, most strange, and most unexpected act of that great drama—the greatest tragedy in the whole history of man.

Have you any confidence in the tradition which fixes the site of those scenes at the place called el Mŭhrakah, near the ruined village of el Mansûrah?

I have, and for many reasons. From the very nature of the case, it is nearly incredible that such a site should have been lost or forgotten. The narrative itself locates the scene on Carmel, and, by necessary implication, on the south-eastern end of it, looking off towards Jezreel. Within these narrow limits there is not much room for uncertainty or mistake. Again, it is clear that the place was sacred to the worship of Jehovah before the days of Elijah.[1] There had been an altar there, which some one, most likely Jezebel, had caused to be thrown down; and, after these stupendous miracles, it is not to be believed that the scene of them would be forgotten. They took place before all the people, and not in some far-off desert, difficult of access and rarely visited, but in a conspicuous portion of a densely-inhabited country, and one which has never ceased to be inhabited from that day to this. Accordingly, I believe that the tradition of this site has never died out of the country.

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[1] 1 Kings xviii. 1–46.

I have little doubt that there was the spot of the oracle on Carmel mentioned by Tacitus in his history of Vespasian. His description is very remarkable: "Between Syria and Judæa stands a mountain known by the name of Mount Carmel, on the top of which a god is worshipped under no other title than that of the place, and, according to the ancient usage, without a temple or even a statue. An altar is erected in the open air, and there adoration is made to the presiding deity. On this spot Vespasian offered a sacrifice." Let us carefully consider this bit of history.

The historian tells us that after the sacrifice Vespasian went to Cæsarea. Now I believe that the Roman road down the coast from the north passed round the south-eastern end of Carmel. This conclusion I had reached long before I thought of its bearing on the point before us. But, whether it did or not, the road from the interior certainly followed this route to Cæsarea, and Vespasian marched along it. That would bring him directly beneath el Mŭhrakah.

The place is simply designated as "the spot." There was no temple, no image, only an altar in the open air, and this was "according to the ancient usage" of the place. All this is what we should expect at the seat of Elijah's wonderful miracle, and in striking agreement with what we now actually find there. There is no temple, and no evidence that there ever was one. There is only a "spot" on a natural platform of naked rock, surrounded by a low wall such as may have been there in the days of Elijah, or even before. Within that uncovered enclosure is the sacred spot, without a mark, without a title, as Tacitus has it, save that of el Mŭhrakah —the place of sacrifice.

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[1] 1 Kings xviii. 30.

EL MŬHRAKAH—THE PLACE OF SACRIFICE.

It is mentioned by pilgrims in subsequent ages briefly, according to their custom, yet in such a way as to leave no doubt that the site was still kept in remembrance. One of the "stations" of ancient pilgrimage derived its name from it.

It is still known and reverenced by the inhabitants of this neighborhood—Jews, Christians, Moslems, Druses, and Bedawîn—and as the site of the miracles of Elijah. My guide to it, a Druse, approached it with reverence; and this present veneration of all sects accords well with the account given by Tacitus. It was then in the hands of heathen priests or of corrupt Samaritans, but so celebrated that pilgrims of all nations resorted to it. This is in agreement with even the present customs of this country. Many shrines of the Moslem, and other sects, owe their sanctity to events recorded in Biblical history. In this particular case it is probable that those mingled people who were transported hither from Assyria, "who feared the Lord and served Baal," would appropriate to the uses of their superstitions this celebrated "spot." Their descendants may have held possession of it when Vespasian passed this way, and the fame of its oracle induced even him, the master of the Roman world, to consult it.

The name el Mŭhrakah, signifying the place of sacrifice, is so far confirmatory of the tradition. Such native and significant names do not fasten upon any spot without adequate reason, and there is in almost every case some foundation in truth for them. In this instance it is the name we should expect, and applied to the spot most likely to be the true one.

There is no other place with opposing claims. It has no rival. This is remarkable in a country where there are many conflicting traditions in regard to almost every celebrated site. Not only is there nothing to disturb its claims, but the closest scrutiny into the narrative, even to minute incidents and implications, corroborate and confirm them. Why, therefore, should there be a doubt about the matter? I confess that I am troubled with none.

Mr. Van de Velde, who visited this place in company with Dr. Kalley, was the first, so far as I know, to publish a description of the Mŭhrakah, and his account is sufficiently accurate. I do not agree with him, however, that the water poured upon the sacrifice was procured from the fountain he mentions. That fountain was nearly dry when I saw it; nor do I think it could hold out through the dry season, even of one ordinary summer. How, then, could it last through three years and a half of total absence of rain? Nor are there any marks of antiquity about it. The water was obtained, as I suppose, from the permanent sources of the Kishon, at the base of Carmel. It is even doubtful whether any of them, except the one of Sa'adîeh, could have survived such a protracted drought. Nor would the distance even to that be so great as to create any difficulty. The path from el Mŭhrakah brought me to the Kishon at Tell el Kŭssîs, and, from the nature of the mountain, the priests of Baal may have been "brought down to the brook Kishon" by the same way. They were, therefore, in all probability, put to death near it, and naturally that act would fasten its name to the tell as the most conspicuous object in the neighborhood.

If Elijah returned to the place of sacrifice after the slaughter of the priests, his servant would have to go but a short distance to obtain an extensive view of the sea, towards Cæsarea, and also over the plain of Acre to the north-west. I suppose that both Elijah and Ahab did return to el Mŭhrakah: Ahab to partake of the feast, prepared and spread somewhere near at hand, which always formed part of such sacrifices, and Elijah to pray for rain. This is implied by the words of the prophet to the king, "Get thee up, eat and drink;" and again, "Get thee down, that the rain stop thee not."

The best way to reach el Mŭhrakah is to go from Haifa, along the base of Carmel, past Tell Harothîeh, to Tell el Kŭssîs, and then ascend the mountain by some ruins called el Mansûrah, the same as those on the north-eastern end of the mountain. But without a guide it is next to impossible to find the spot, so dense is the jungle of thorn-bushes on that part of Carmel. I once undertook to reach it from the south-west, but got lost, and finally had to procure a guide from Idjzîm, and then cross deep gorges and climb steep precipices, to the no small danger and fatigue of both horse and rider.

How large a portion of those wonderful actions are we to suppose took place on the day of the sacrifice?

The whole of them, we are told, after the assembling of the people, until the return of the king to Jezreel.

This brings to mind the feat performed by the prophet at the close of that wonderful drama. It has always appeared to me most extraordinary conduct for a man of his age, character, and office.

And yet, when rightly understood, it was full of important instruction. Elijah, as God's minister, had overwhelmed the king with shame and confusion in the presence of his subjects. The natural tendency of this would be to lower him in their eyes, and lessen their respect for his authority. It was not the intention, however, to weaken the Government nor to encourage rebellion. The prophet was, therefore, divinely directed to give a testimony of respect and honor to the king as public and striking as, from necessity, had been the opposition and rebuke to his idolatry. The mode of doing honor to Ahab by running before his chariot was in accordance with the customs of the East, even to this day.

I was reminded of this incident many years ago at Jaffa, when Muhammed 'Aly came to that city with a large army to quell the rebellion in Palestine. The camp was on the sand-hills south of the city, while Muhammed 'Aly stopped inside the walls. The officers were constantly going and coming, preceded by runners, who always kept just ahead of the horses, no matter how furiously they were ridden; and, in order to run with the greater ease, they not only girded up their loins very tightly, but also tucked up their loose garments under the girdle, lest they should be incommoded by them. Thus, probably, did Elijah. The distance from the base of Carmel across the plain to Jezreel is about twelve miles, and was accomplished in not less than three hours, for "there was wind and a great rain." It was necessary that the "hand of the Lord should be upon" the prophet, or he could not have achieved it.

It is easy to locate the place where the angry King of Israel met Elijah. The prophet was returning from Sarepta, between Sidon and Tyre, along the common highway which led up the valley of the Kishon to Megiddo, and may have reached that immediate neighborhood where the permanent fountains of that river begin. There he found Obadiah, with part of the beasts seeking grass to keep them alive. It is evident that Ahab himself was not far off. Probably he had gone out on that marshy part of the plain, near Tell eth Thôrah, hoping also to find grass. The only other part of this region where grass could be sought for at the end of such a drought would be down the valley of Jezreel, east of that city, around the fountain of 'Ain Jalûd. But the narrative does not countenance the idea that Ahab was at such a distance from Carmel, and that source must have been already exhausted. The place of meeting was, therefore, near the south-east end of Carmel, not far from Tell el Kŭssîs.

Are we to suppose that the three years' drought prevailed over all the country?

It appears probable, from the narrative, that it extended only over the kingdom of Israel, on whose account it was sent. The plain of Sarepta, however, was involved, but that lay within the proper territorial limits of Israel. In order to understand how it was possible to keep any part of that kingdom from being absolutely depopulated, we may remember that, although all the crops fail even when there is a drought of only a few months in spring, and that in a single dry summer the ordinary fountains cease, yet there are others, such as 'Ain Jalûd, in the valley of Jezreel, and some of the sources of the Kishon at the base of Carmel, which have never been known to dry up entirely. Moreover, there is no reason to suppose that the drought extended to Hermon and Lebanon, and hence the great fountains of the Jordan would keep the lakes full and the river strong; hence water could be brought from those sources of supply on camels and mules, and by other means of transportation.

It is certain, too, that a portion of the people would remove to the vicinity of these supplies, and to more distant neighborhoods. As to provisions, the Mediterranean was on their western border, and corn from Egypt could be brought, as is still done in seasons of scarcity. By these and other means a remnant would be preserved; but we are not to lessen the calamity in our account of these resources. The wandering of the king in search of grass; his angry salutation to the prophet; the dying destitution of the widow at Sarepta, all show the extent and severity of the famine.

Our long account about the wonderful deed of Elijah and the great drought that desolated this region in the ancient time has brought us to the banks of the Kishon, at the eastern base of Carmel, and for some distance now we will have to encounter its treacherous mud.

That dilapidated hamlet on our right, as we entered the narrow pass of the Kishon, between the bold and rugged slopes of Carmel and the oak-clad hills of Galilee, around which the river pursues its tortuous course, was Harosheth of the Gentiles, I suppose.

It may well answer for the Biblical site; and the double tell on the right of our path after we crossed the Kishon was Tell Harothîeh. South of it, on the highest part of Carmel, about seventeen hundred feet above the sea, is the Druse village of el 'Asifia; but, leaving names and topographical questions behind, we must hasten through this beautiful and park-like scenery to our tents at Haifa before twilight deepens to darker night, and we get perplexed in some parts of this road, as I have been more than once before.

This deep water through which our horses are wading is the permanent source of the Kishon.

If I was alone, I should certainly share the hesitation of my horse in venturing through it.

There is no danger, for the bottom here is not miry like that of the Kishon where we crossed it below el Harothîeh. You need only guide your horse with care, to prevent his stumbling over the stones and plunging you into the stream. This fountain is called 'Ain es Sa'adîyeh by the natives, and is the never-failing source of the Kishon. The water is slightly brackish, owing, perhaps, to the fact that it flows out from under the very roots of Carmel, and nearly on a level with the sea-shore, towards which it creeps sluggishly along through an impenetrable jungle and a marsh of bottomless mud.

How grateful the sight of the sea after so long an absence from its shores! The ships in the port of Haifa recall us to civilization, and bring to mind other countries besides this ancient land, whose length and breadth we have traversed thus far in safety.

VII.

HAIFA TO ACRE.

Haifa.—German Colony.—Population of Haifa.—Haifa el 'Atîkah.—Sycaminum.—Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake and Lieutenant Conder suggest Tell es Semak.—Tancred.—Ascent of Carmel.—Mount Carmel, Jebel Mâr Elyâs.—Biblical Allusions to Carmel.—Convent on Carmel.—Dr. Robinson's Resumé of its Early History.—Padre Giovanni Battista.—Carmelite Monks.—View from the Dome of the Convent.—Haifa to Acre.—Palm-grove.—Insecurity of the Roadstead of Haifa.—Crossing the Kishon.—Mr. MacGregor in his Canoe "Rob Roy."—Sandy Beach around the Head of the Bay of Acre.—Biblical Allusions to Robbers.—Nahr en N'amân, the Belus.—Pliny's Lake Cendevia.—Discovery of Glass.—Turon.—Approach to Acre.—Biblical and Historical Notices of Acre.—The Border of Asher.—Josephus's Description of the Boundary of Asher.—The Lot of Zebulun.—Zidon.—Phœnicia.—Acre during the Christian Era.—The Knights of St. John.—St. Jean d'Acre.—Reland's "Palestine" and Robinson's "Researches."—Ibrahim Pasha.—The British Fleet.—Fortifications of Acre.—Dr. Kitto.—Vaults under the Houses of Acre.—Biblical Allusions to Summer and Winter Houses.—El Behajeh.—Suburbs of Acre.—The Inhabitants of Acre.—'Amkah, Beth-emek.—Kŭl'at Jedîn, Castellum Indi.—W'ar.—Kabîreh.—Reservoirs.—Aqueducts to Acre, Ancient and Modern.—Old Quarries.—Jabal, Father of Tent-dwellers.—Khurbet esh Shwoizerîyeh.—Column of Hŭmsîn.—El Bŭssah.—'Ammarîyeh.—Ancient Ruins.—Kŭl'at Kureîn, Montfort.—The Cony.—Biblical References to the Cony.—The Hebrew Shaphan.—Honey out of the Rock.—Meat of John the Baptist.—M'alia.—Tershîha.—'Alia.—Semâdy, Female Head-dress of Silver Coins.—Sheîkh 'Aly el Mughraby, a Moslem Reformer.—Domestic Life of the Natives.—"A Continual Dropping, and a Contentious Woman."—Eliphaz the Temanite.—References to Natural Phenomena by Moses.—"The Ointment of his Right Hand."—'Alma.—Cities standing on their Tells.—Stationary and Roving Bedawîn.—Peasant Arabs.—"The Nature of Cleanliness."—"To your Tents, O Israel!"—Modern Custom of living in Tents.—Route from Acre to Tyre.—Râs el 'Ain.—Râs el Abyad, Promontorium Album.—Kŭl'at esh Shem'a.—Alexandroschene.—Um el 'Amed.—St. Helena's Tower.—Râs en Nakûrah, Scala Tyriorum.—Râs el Musheîrifeh.—Burj el Musheîrifeh.—Misrephoth-maim.—Petrified Star-fish.—Achzib, Ez Zîb.—Palm-trees and Beehives.—El Mezra'ah.

May 13th.

THE position of Haifa—on a gentle slope close to the sea-shore, at the southern end of the Bay of Acre, and having a spur of the mountain rising immediately behind it, crowned by a small castle, and beyond and above that the promontory of Carmel itself, with the convent on its summit—must have always rendered it a place of importance. The town has greatly improved since my first visit many years ago; and, as the steamers between Beirût and Alexandria touch here, it must increase up to a certain point. It will not become a large city unless a railroad from Damascus and the far East should terminate there; then, indeed, it would speedily expand into a great emporium. A few stately palm-trees rise above the houses within the walls of the town, and beyond it westward there are some gardens and olive-orchards.

Recently the level plain at the base of Carmel and west of Haifa has been occupied by a colony of Germans similar to that at Jaffa, and belonging to the sect of the Temple. The inhabitants of the colony follow various trades and occupations, and have erected houses, and fitted them up in European style, built schools, cultivated vegetable gardens, planted vineyards, and set out many olive, fig, and other fruit-bearing trees. In many ways they are setting an example of civilization and honest industry which should prove beneficial to the natives around them. Men, women, and children, they number over two hundred and fifty souls, but there is not much probability of any large increase to the colony.

Including the German colonists, and the various sects without and within the town, the present inhabitants of Haifa are said to be about four thousand, less than half of whom are Moslems; quite an exceptional circumstance for a seaport of Palestine.

The old town, or Haifa el 'Atîkah, was farther west, and nearer the sea than the German colony. The ruins are now covered with gardens belonging to the descendants of the original owners of the land. Somewhere in that neighborhood the ancient Sycaminum mentioned by Greek and Roman writers is supposed to have stood. Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake and Lieutenant Conder have suggested that the neighboring ruin on Tell es Semak may perhaps have stronger claims, for it agrees better with the notices of the Itineraries.

No Biblical interest attaches to Haifa, and there is nothing of historical importance to relate concerning it, save that in the year 1100 it was besieged and stormed by Tancred; but it reverted to the Saracens nearly ninety years later, after the defeat of the Cru-

HAIFA AND CARMEL.

saders at the battle of Hattîn. We have, therefore, no occasion to stop here, for there are no antiquities except rock-cut tombs, and our object is to visit the convent on Mount Carmel. It will take us about forty minutes to climb up to it; but the view, ever-widening and changing as you ascend, will richly repay the toil. At the convent we will rest and refresh ourselves in the celebrated refectory of the Carmelite monks. Their establishment is, indeed, quite as much a hotel as a house for prayer and religious seclusion.

This winding path leading up and around the steep ledges of Carmel to the convent is more like a staircase than a road.

You had better become acquainted with its sinuosities and slippery places, for we will have to descend by the same way in order to reach Acre, to which place our tents have already preceded us.

The celebrated ridge—called in the Bible Mount Carmel, and by the Arabs Jebel Kurmul, or Mâr Elyâs, in honor of Elijah—is an extension of the hills of Samaria, in a north-westerly direction, for a distance of about eighteen miles, terminating in the bold promontory of Carmel, which descends almost literally into the sea. It is steep and lofty where it overhangs the Mediterranean above Haifa, and on that face which overlooks the plain of Acre on the north, and that of Esdraelon towards the south-east. It sinks down gradually southward along its entire length into the rich plain of Cæsarea and the wooded hills of Samaria, and may be said to separate the plain of Esdraelon from that of Sharon. There are, however, deep ravines and abrupt precipices in every direction, not a little perplexing to the explorer. It is seventeen hundred and thirty feet high at the village of el 'Asifia, above the Kishon; and from thence there is a regular descent, till, at the convent, it is about five hundred and fifty feet above the level of the sea.

There is no special excellency in Carmel at the present day, whatever may be said of Sharon.[1] Its name Kurmul, or Kerm el, signifies the vineyard—of God; but its vineyards have all disappeared. It was a glorious mountain, however, and a prominent landmark, according to Jeremiah: "As I live, saith the King, whose name is The Lord of hosts, Surely as Tabor is among the mountains, and as Carmel by the sea, so shall he come."[2] Carmel was a resort of herdsmen. Amos says, "The habitations of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither," in the time of the threatened judgment, and this implies that its pastures were not ordinarily liable to wither.[1] This may, in part, have been occasioned by the heavy dews which its lofty elevation, so near the sea, causes to distil nightly upon its thirsty head. I found it quite green and flowery in midsummer. It was a noble pasture-field, and, in reference to that characteristic, Micah utters this sweet prayer: "Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitarily in the wood, in the midst of Carmel."[2] Amos tells us that in his day the top of it was a place to hide in, nor has it changed its character in this respect. "Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down: and though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence."[3]

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[1] Isa. xxxv. 2.

[2] Jer. xlvi. 18.

I would not have been prompted to place the "top of Carmel" third in such a series of hiding-places, yet I can fully appreciate the comparison from my own experience. Ascending from the south, we followed a wild, narrow wady overhung by trees, bushes, and tangled creepers, through which my guide thought we could get up to the top, but it became absolutely impracticable, and we were obliged to find our way back again. And even after we reached the summit, it was so rough and broken in some places, and the thorn-bushes so thick-set and sharp, that our clothes were torn, and our hands and faces severely lacerated; nor could I see my guide at times ten steps ahead of me. From such Biblical intimations, we may believe that Carmel was not very thickly inhabited. There are now some ten or eleven small villages on and around it, occupied by Moslems and Druses; and, besides these, I have the names of eight ruins, none of which, however, are large or historical.

But here we are at the Convent, or Deir, of Mâr Elyâs. Dr. Robinson gives us a resumé of its early history, and from the hospitable monks within we can obtain further information regarding the modern edifice.

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[1] Amos i. 2.

[2] Micah vii. 14.

[3] Amos ix. 2, 3.

He says: "The present convent on Mount Carmel is an edifice of quite recent date. The site is very conspicuous, and therefore is most probably that of a heathen altar. The mountain was early the resort of hermits dwelling in caves and grottoes, many of which are still extant. This continued in the time of the Crusades. In 1180 Phocas speaks of the ruins of what he calls a large monastery, towards the sea. A century later, when Brocardus wrote, the order of Carmelites occupied the mountain; and about 1340, in the time of Ludolf von Suchem, they had on it a fine claustrum built in honor of the Virgin, and fifteen claustra in the Holy Land generally.

"In the days of Quaresmius, about 1620, there existed upon the summit of the mountain only the ruins of a large church. Thirty or forty years later, Doubdan and D'Arvieux both speak of the massive remains as those of an ancient monastery, which the former refers to Helena, and the other to St. Louis, King of France; and both with equal probability. At this time the monks dwelt in excavated grottoes, and had also an excavated chapel. All this, according to Marite, continued in the same state in 1760. At some later time a convent was erected, as to which I find no historical notice; but it was used by the French army in 1799 as a hospital, and was afterwards desolated by the Turks. In 1821 'Abdallah Pasha of 'Akka totally destroyed this building. The present structure has been since erected by the persevering efforts of a single monk. The history of the enterprise is given by Schubert and Wilson."[1]

The monk referred to is Padre Giovanni Battista of Frascati, in Italy, who drew the plans of the convent himself, and for nearly fifteen years travelled through Europe and Asia, soliciting the funds necessary for its construction. It is a spacious and handsome building, the finest of its kind in Palestine—two stories high, and solidly built of stone. The ground-floor is used for offices and kitchens, a pharmacy and surgery, and a portion of it is set apart for poor pilgrims. The first floor consists of lofty rooms, neatly furnished, and designed for the accommodation of travellers. On the second floor are the cells of the monks, the convent library, and a refectory. In

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[1] Rob. Res. vol. iii. p. 101.

DEIR MÂR ELYÂS—CONVENT ON CARMEL.

the centre of the building is the church, the dome of which rises above the flat roof. It is a large edifice, handsomely decorated, and provided with a good organ. The altar is over the cave said to have been the retreat of Elijah.

It is claimed for the order of Carmelite monks that it has descended in direct line from the days of the prophet Elijah, the founder of the brotherhood. The monks are called Brethren of St. Mary of Carmel, for the Virgin is the protectress of their order.

Under the guidance of one of the monks, we will now ascend to the top of the dome, from whence is obtained the finest panorama of the surrounding country far and wide.

Northward, at our feet, lies Haifa and the crescent-shaped bay. On the right is the green plain, and farther north is the city of Acre, gleaming in the broad sunlight. Beyond, the white headland of Râs el Abyad shuts off from the view those ancient cities, Tyre and Sidon. In the far-off distance is "that goodly mountain, Lebanon," half lost in the clouds. Eastward the hills of Galilee, the wooded slopes of Tabor, and the heights of dewy Hermon rise, rank above rank, to the sky. Southward, here and there between the gaps, the mountains of Bashan, "on the other side Jordan," are plainly visible, and the neby above Nazareth can be distinctly seen. To the south is 'Athlît, the Castellum Peregrinorum of the Crusades; beyond it is Tantûra, the ancient Dor, and farther still is Cæsarea, where Paul was imprisoned; and beyond that we catch glimpses of the plain of Sharon, extending down towards Philistia. Westward is the boundless expanse of "the uttermost sea," "this great and wide sea," sweeping round from north to south, and stretching far away to the west till lost to sight in the dim horizon.

But, in the words of the prophet Elijah, whose name this convent "delighteth to honor," "Up, get thee down," for along that beach lies our road to Acre, and the morning is far spent.

From Haifa to Acre the distance around the head of the bay is about nine miles, or two good hours' ride, with little of interest to vary the monotonous plash of the wavelets that break on the sandy shore at the feet of our horses.

On our right is a grove of picturesque and stately palm-trees, the largest one of the kind we have yet seen.

They grow singly and in groups of two or more upon a sandy delta, its base resting against the foot of Carmel, and the apex at the mouth of the Kishon. Having followed "that ancient river" from its feeble beginnings in the plain of Esdraelon, we will soon cross it where it runs into the sea.

I notice several wrecks along the shore, and here is one almost buried beneath the sand. It has evidently been cast away by the last storm. To what do you attribute the insecurity of this roadstead?

I have heard captains complain that the bottom is not secure, and so the anchor drags. The real cause of so many disasters, I suppose, is found in the nature of the coast and of the interior. The high ridge of Carmel runs far down to the south-east, and between it and the mountains of Galilee on the north there is the narrow opening into the plain of Esdraelon through which the Kishon winds its way to the sea. And although the promontory of Carmel juts far into the bay to the north-west, yet, owing to the physical formation alluded to, and the direction of the low flats of the Kishon along the base of the mountain, the winter gales are drawn round that headland into the bay, and sweep down past the town of Haifa towards the south-east with great violence. The roadstead is wholly insecure in a gale from the west, and still more so during one from an intervening point between that and the north. There is no possibility of beating out to sea; and an accident happening to a ship's cable or anchor, she must inevitably be driven upon the shore. You need not wonder, therefore, at the wrecks strewn along the beach, nor at the extent of these sand downs, which stretch inland farther than we can see.

Crossing the Kishon appears to be quite an undertaking.

You would scarcely suppose, from the present depth of the current, that one may pass along the beach three months hence and find no river at all, and yet so my experience proves. The first time I crossed the Kishon in a boat, and swam the horses; the next time there was no river, not even a rill to be seen. This is explained by referring to the inward west and north-west winds I have spoken of. These ever drive the waves against the mouth of the river, and, as soon as the dry season reduces its volume, a sand-bank dams up the stream; the river then spreads out into a large marsh, slowly percolates through the sand, and thus finds its way to the sea.

Mr. MacGregor is the only traveller who ever attempted to explore the marsh of the Kishon, and he seems to have been alarmed by a crocodile that rose under his famous canoe, "Rob Roy," and nearly capsized it. It is quite possible that crocodiles exist in that impenetrable morass, as they do in that of the Crocodile River, near Cæsarea; but it is not probable that they will ever again be disturbed by a human visitor. The Kishon is strong enough now, however, and if we do not watch our opportunity and choose our path wisely, following the sand-bank at its mouth, we shall fare badly between it and the waves, which come rolling in to swell its dimensions. This sand-bank is often pushed out a considerable distance into the sea, and to follow it when the wind blows and the waves run high is not a little perplexing to a timid rider.

The sea-shore, so smooth and solid, is one of the finest places for a gallop, and there is always something exhilarating in a ride round the head of this bay. The city of Acre in front; Carmel, with its holy traditions, behind; the long reach of perfectly level beach, with men and animals diminishing in the distance; the broad bay, with its boats and ships, opening out upon the boundless sea, all combine to excite the mind and enliven the scene.

These sandy downs, with feathery reeds running far inland, the chosen retreat of the wild boar and wild Bedawîn, suggest just enough of insecurity to keep the imagination on the alert. The Arab robber lurks like a wolf amongst those sand-heaps, and springs out suddenly upon the solitary traveller, robs him, and then plunges again into the wilderness of sand-hills and reedy downs, where pursuit is fruitless. It seems absurd to fear a surprise just here—Haifa in the rear, Acre before, and travellers in sight both ways. Robberies, however, do often occur where we now are. Strange country! for it has always been so.

There are many allusions to just such things in its history, in the Psalms of David, and by the prophets of Israel. A whole class of Biblical imagery is based upon them. Thus, in Psalms x. 8–10: "He sitteth in the lurking places of the villages: in the secret places doth he murder the innocent: his eyes are privily set against the poor. He lieth in wait secretly as a lion in his den: he lieth in wait to catch the poor." And a hundred rascally robbers, the living originals of this picture, are this day lying in wait all over the country to catch poor helpless travellers. You observe that all the people we meet are armed; nor would they venture to go from Acre to Haifa without their musket, although the cannon of their castles seem to command every foot of the way.

What dark and sluggish stream is this we have just forded?

It is the Nahr en N'amân. It rises in the mountains north-east of Shefa 'Omr; but the perennial fountains, which drive a number of mills, are at Tell Kurdâny, on the plain. There a large marsh—called a lake by the same sort of courtesy that dignifies this brook with the name of river—was made, like that of Hums on the Orontes, by a strong and ancient dam across the lower end of the morass. The whole area of the lake may be three miles in circuit, and the river at the mills is quite as large as here by the sea. The entire length of the N'amân, from the fountains to the sea, is less than six miles. The evil qualities of the water, and also its dark color, are derived from the marshes at its head. I came near being swallowed up in its fathomless depths of mire. The N'amân is, I suppose, the Belus, which Pliny says had its origin in a lake called Cendevia. He speaks of its insalubrity; and no doubt the fevers which afflict Acre have their origin in the marshes of this stream. It is pleasant to confirm the statement of Pliny about this lake, for its existence has been denied by some modern travellers.

Pliny repeats the story about the discovery of glass by some Phœnician sailors who were cooking their dinner on the sand at the mouth of this river. How do you account for that?

When descending from Yerka to Acre several years ago, I noticed that the rock for many miles had a vitreous appearance, as if smelted in some grand furnace of nature, and needed only to be melted over again to make genuine glass. The idea occurred to me at the time that the disintegration of this vitreous rock might have furnished the glassy particles in the bed of the Belus, and other brooks which fall into the sea along this part of the coast, and which first led to the traditional discovery of glass; or, if those sailors supported their saucepans on pieces of rock placed round the fire, they might have melted so as to give the first hint which led to the discovery. The story may, therefore, have some foundation in fact. Glass, however, was known to the Egyptians at an early age, and the manufacture of it may have been invented by them. The Biblical references to glass are few, and of no special importance.

This "broad hill on our right" is said "to have been the Turon of the Crusades, on which King Guido of Jerusalem pitched his camp during the siege of Akka; and where, too, the French, in 1799, erected their batteries."[1]

The promontory upon which Acre is built appears to be quite low and flat as we approach the town from the south.

In reality, however, the position of Acre, with the sea on three sides, and a narrow neck of land in front, is well adapted for a strong fortress; and this has long been its special character, and is so at the present day.

May 13th. Evening.

There are but two notices of Acre in the Bible that I could find: in Judges i. 31, it is said "neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho," which not only ascertains the fact of its existence at that early age, but also that it belonged to Asher, and was too strong to be subdued by that tribe; and in Acts xxi. 7, we read that Paul visited it on his way from Tyre to Cæsarea and Jerusalem.

And they include the whole. It is often mentioned in the Apocryphal books, and in the wars of the Maccabees, and by Josephus, under the name of Ptolemais, given to it by one of the Ptolemys of Egypt. A place so ancient and celebrated in general history is worthy of study for its own sake, as well as for the rank it so long held in later times as the chief city on this coast. But it would take a volume to trace out its manifold vicissitudes and various fortunes.

In the distribution of the Promised Land made by Joshua, Accho was not mentioned, although it must have lain within the border of the tribe of Asher. Can you draw the boundary line with any degree of certainty?

Not at all. It had Carmel on the south, which seems also to have belonged, in part at least, to Zebulun. Naphtali on the east, and the sea-board on the west. But we must leave a large margin of territory along the border line between those places known to have belonged to Naphtali, and those which were allotted to Asher. And so, also, Asher and Zebulun met in the valley of Jiphthah-el, which may have been the wady of the Kishon; but that is quite uncertain.

The reason why the boundaries of the different tribes were so eccentric originally, and are now so difficult to follow, was, that the "lots" were not meted out according to geographical lines, but lands of certain cities lying more or less contiguous were assigned to each tribe as its inheritance. These cities were the capitals of small districts; and the territory of one might extend far into and overlap that of the next adjacent to it, just as that of Tibnîn, and Hûnîn, and Bint Jebail on the mountains east of Acre does now. Thus it is rendered possible that Cabul, and Beth-emek, and Kanah may have all lain along the eastern border of Asher. And it might happen that a village on the border of the plain of Accho would belong to Naphtali, and the next one, far east on the mountains, to Asher. The sea-coast was in the hands of Accho, Achzib, Tyre, and Zidon, which cities the Asherites could never conquer. There remains, therefore, for Asher the hills sloping towards the sea, with so much of the plains as could be subdued.

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[1] Rob. Res. vol. iii. p. 91.

Josephus is even more indefinite than Joshua. He says, "The tribe of Aser had that part which was called the valley, for such it was, and all that part which lay over against Zidon. The city Aser belonged to their share, which is also named Actipus." Now there is no valley to correspond to this description. The plain of Acre is fully twenty miles long, and the upper part of it, with the eastern hills, we know formed a large part of Asher's "lot." But a plain is not a valley. Farther north Asher probably possessed the promontory called the Ladder of Tyre, which is about a thousand feet high and eight miles across, and was dotted with villages and towns, as it is now with ruins. Still farther on, in the same direction, that tribe had what is now called Sâhil Kâna, the plain of Kâna, including the hills and the eastern margin of the plain of Tyre to the Kâsimîeh, about sixteen miles in length, and probably not more than eight in breadth. If the line crossed the river Kâsimîeh so as to possess the parts over against Zidon, as Josephus says, then Asher had the hill-country now called Aklîm esh Shummâr, and parts of the districts of esh Shŭkîf and et Tuffâh, above Sidon. This would give a length of not less than sixty miles, with a mean breadth of ten or twelve, but it is in no proper sense a valley.

Josephus was probably acquainted personally with only that part of Asher which extended along the east side of the plain of

Acre, terminating at the sea near Burj el Musheîrifeh. This tract, seen from the neighboring heights of Galilee, would look like a valley, for a line of low sand-hills begins in front of Acre at Tell el Fakhâr, and runs parallel to the coast northward to Nahr el Kŭrn, in the vicinity of ez Zîb. The plain between the sea-coast and the hills of Galilee formed a valuable part of Asher's "lot," and might have been called a valley. But it is now absolutely impossible to draw lines around the separate lots of the tribes with any degree of certainty. Their general positions with relation to each other, however, can be ascertained with sufficient exactness for all important purposes in the study of Biblical geography.

I have one more inquiry to make before you drop the subject. The sea-board from Acre to Zidon belonged to Asher, and the lot of Zebulun extended eastward towards Tabor. Now, how do you reconcile this with the prophecy of Jacob in Genesis xlix. 13: "Zebulun shall dwell at the haven of the sea; and he shall be for an haven of ships; and his border shall be unto Zidon?"

There is, in fact, an apparent contradiction here between prophecy and history which I have not seen explained, or even noticed. That the territory of Zebulun did not reach to the city of Zidon is certain. Perhaps the following considerations may reconcile the prophecy of the dying patriarch with the subsequent history and home of Zebulun. In the time of Jacob, while yet the Israelites were in Egypt, Zidon was the representative of all Phœnicia. She was, in fact, the mother of the Phœnicians, and is so spoken of by Homer several hundred years after the death of Jacob. Homer does not speak of Achzib, or Acre, or Dor, but only of Zidon, when he has occasion to mention Phœnicia.

Phœnicia, or Zidonia, extended south of Acre, and the territory assigned to Zebulun appears to have touched the sea on that part of the coast; Jacob therefore spoke according to the received geography of his time, but with prophetic brevity mentioned only Zidon, the parent city of the Phœnicians. When, however, Joshua, several hundred years later, came to divide the country between the tribes, it became necessary to specify the subordinate places, and no doubt some of the cities south of Zidon had by that time risen to importance, and might well have given name to the coast in their vicinity; at all events, Joshua was obliged to mention them in defining the limits of the tribes.

Though the territory of Zebulun may have touched the sea far south of the city of Zidon, yet his "haven of ships" was actually a part of the general coast of Zidonia as understood by Jacob when he uttered his prophecy. Nor is it at all improbable that the territory of Zidon did, even then, extend southward to where Zebulun had his border at the sea, thus meeting the very letter of the promise.

But to return to the story of Acre. "In the early centuries of the Christian era it was mentioned by Eusebius and Jerome, and was the seat of a Christian bishopric."[1] It fell into the hands of the Moslems, A.D. 638, after the fall of Jerusalem and the surrender of Cæsarea. It was the last fortress evacuated by the Crusaders in Palestine. The Knights of St. John, from whom it took the name of St. Jean d'Acre, gave it up to the Sultân Melek el Ashraf of Egypt, in A.D. 1291, and thus ended the anomalous and wonderful kingdom of the Franks in the Holy Land.

That extraordinary man, Mr. Reland, has culled out of ancient authors nearly everything that has come down to our time about Acre, and you will find it in his "Palestina Illustrata." One of the best modern compendiums of her history is that of Dr. Robinson, in his learned work, "Biblical Researches in Palestine."[2]

Acre was besieged for six months by Ibrahim Pasha, and when I visited it soon after he had taken it, the whole place was one mass of ruins. He immediately set about repairing its fortifications, and continued that work during the time he held possession of Syria. Had he been permitted to complete the fosse, and join the sea from the north-west to the bay at the south-east, and thus make Acre an island, the defences of the place might have been almost impregnable. But the British fleet, under Admiral Stopford and Commodore Napier, bombarded the town on November 3d, 1840, and the powder-magazine was blown up, reducing the fortifications to ruins once more. The walls and castles have again been repaired, and are now as strong, perhaps, as ever.

I have been round the fortifications, and estimate their circuit

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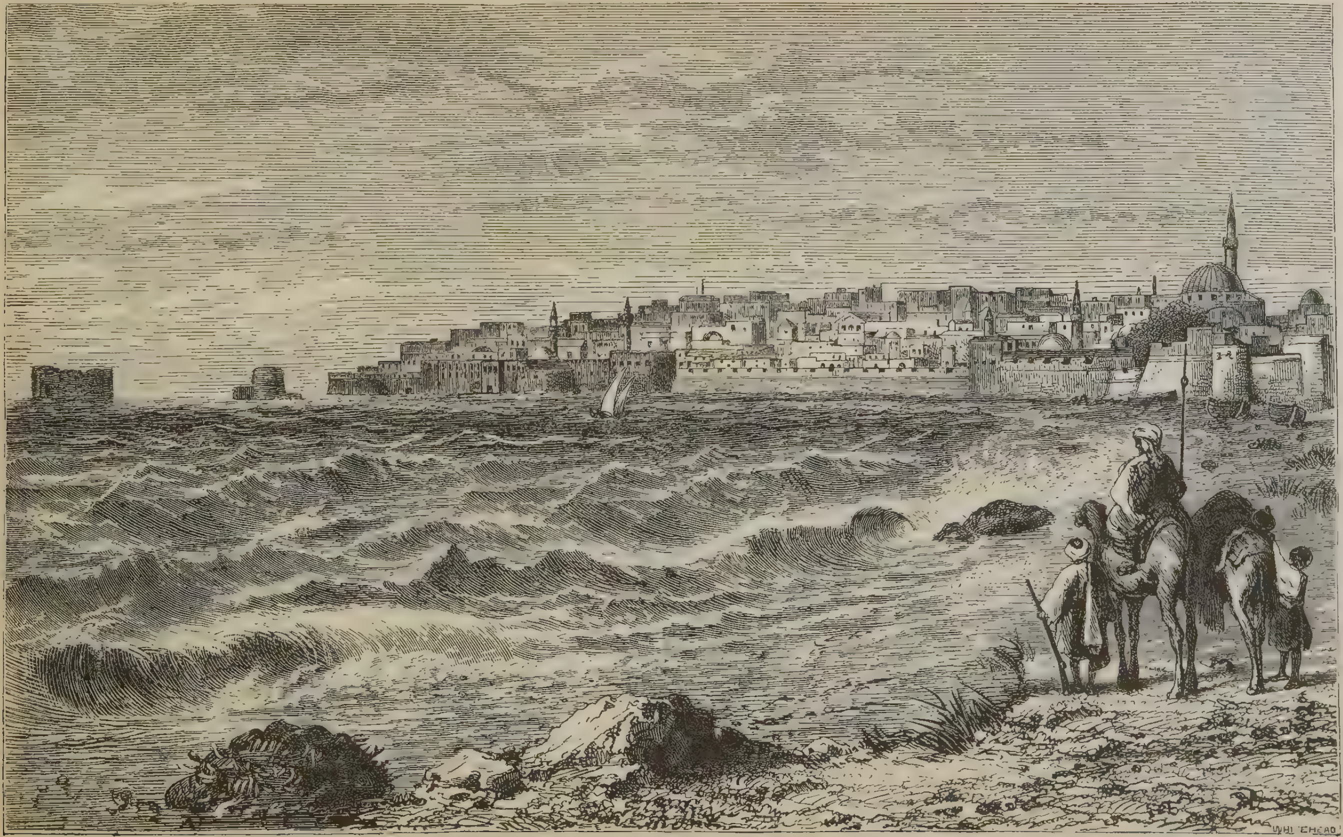
[1] Rob. Res. vol. iii. p. 92.

[2] Rob. Res. vol. iii. p. 89–100.



'AKKA—ACRE.

at about two and a half miles. They seem to me to be skilfully planned, and very substantial. But as modern ships can bring their cannon to bear upon them, the guns on the walls could be silenced at once.

The number of cannon of all sorts is nearly four hundred, but most of them are very inferior, and the carriages are old and rickety. They would be of very little service in actual combat. On a large bronze cannon commanding the harbor is this somewhat satirical motto: "Ultima ratio regum." Alas! when they begin their "last argument," Death on his pale horse goes forth to slay, and hell follows after to devour. The fortifications on the land side are almost concealed by admirably-constructed glacis without and beyond the deep ditch which runs round the wall. The piercings for cannon are so placed as to sweep every approach from that direction.

Acre has no source of life or prosperity but what is dependent on its military character, and its municipal regulations are governed by the rigid laws of war. There is but one gate on the land side, skilfully placed at the water's edge on the south-east angle, and strongly defended. A sea gate leads to the shipping in the harbor, and both are shut at sunset. To one coming towards Acre from the east across the plain, it seems considerably elevated above the general level, and its appearance is rather imposing. This elevation is owing to the accumulation of rubbish during its long life of wars, desolations, and reconstructions. The modern city now stands upon the ruins of many generations.

Dr. Kitto is mistaken in supposing that the vaults under some of the houses in Acre mentioned by Mr. Now were "designed to afford cool underground retreats to the inhabitants during the heat of the day in summer." The heat does not require it, and the climate is so moist on the sea-shore that even upper rooms, if not constantly ventilated, become quickly covered with mould, and are rendered unfit to live in.

At Bagdad, Mosul, and other places along the valley of the Tigris, the houses are constructed with cellars, to which the inhabitants retreat during the day; but then the air is extremely dry there, and the thermometer in midsummer ranges thirty degrees higher than on this coast. In this country, however, castles, and nearly all large buildings, are erected on vaults, and these lower apartments in dwelling-houses are used in winter, not in summer. As soon as the heat begins, the family reopen the upper story, which has been partially deserted during the cold months, and occupy it through the summer and the ensuing fall.

Jeremiah speaks of a winter house in which Jehoiakim sat in the ninth month, with a fire before him on the hearth; and Amos mentions both winter and summer houses.[1] Such language is readily understood by an Oriental. In common parlance, the lower apartments are simply el beit—the house; the upper is the summer house. Every respectable dwelling has both, and they are familiarly called the winter and summer house. If these are on the same story, then the external and airy apartment is the summer house, and that for winter is the interior and more sheltered room. King Jehoiakim was, therefore, sitting in one of the inner apartments of his palace, I suppose, when he cut up Jeremiah's prophetic roll with his penknife and cast it into the fire.

At the summer palace of Abdallah Pasha, called el Bahjeh, are fruit-gardens and olive-groves. A few palms and other trees are seen at Tell el Fakhâr, a short distance south-east of the gate, and some orchards and vegetable gardens are cultivated along the low banks of the N'amâny. Otherwise the surroundings of Acre are very bare and uninteresting. It was not always so, even in modern times, if we are to believe the travellers who have spoken of it. Three things act together to retard the progress and prosperity of Acre: its military character, the unhealthiness of the climate, and the shallowness and insecurity of the harbor. Haifa is, to a great degree, free from these drawbacks, and may ultimately lead away nearly all the trade from Acre.

There are in Acre about five thousand Moslems and Druses, one thousand Christians, and a few hundred Jews—a population not exceeding six thousand five hundred souls.

May 14th.

The plain of Acre is at least twenty miles long, with an average width of about five miles. It extends from the Ladder of Tyre on the north to the base of Carmel on the south, and the hills of Galilee towards the east. The northern half, taking Acre as a centre, with the mountains of Asher and Naphtali above it on the north and east, abounds in ancient sites, some of which are of considerable importance. As our line of travel will lead us hereafter in a different direction, we shall devote this day to that part of the country.

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[1] Jer. xxxvi. 22, 23; Amos iii. 15.

I notice a castle on the mountain to the north-east of us, which presents quite an imposing front towards the plain and the sea.

Like many other things in this country, it looks best at a distance. It is called Kŭl'at Jedîn, probably the Castellum Indi of the Teutonic Knights. We may as well extend our morning ride to it, for the outlook from the castle is wide and impressive.

This part of the plain seems to be all under cultivation, and very fertile, judging from these broad fields of waving grain. Villages appear in all directions, and some of them are quite large.

Only one, however, suggests a Biblical name. That wretched hamlet on our right is called 'Amkah, and may mark the site of Beth-emek, a town on the border of the tribe of Asher.[1] The radicals are the same in both the Hebrew and Arabic, but there are no ancient remains about the place.

We must now commence to climb the mountain to Jedîn, whose castle sits so proudly above us, as if in defiance of all enemies, and the nature of the path forbids further conversation.

Here we are at last before the castle; no great affair after all, and far from equalling the promise that beckoned us on from the plain below.

This is owing to its position on the bold swell of the mountain facing the sea, and with deep wadys on both sides. The modern castle was obviously erected on the site of one more ancient, and was, no doubt, an important place. In its present form it was built about a hundred years ago by Dâher el 'Omar, who preceded Jezzâr Pasha in Acre. It is like Kŭl'at Shem'a, above the Ladder of Tyre, except that here there are more traces of antiquity. It is not easy to see any motive for building a castle at this spot. The position is not strong, and there is neither a great road nor village, or even a fountain of water near to protect it. The view over the plain, however, is most beautiful, and it may have been designed as a health-retreat in those days when castles were necessary to safety.

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[1] Josh. xix. 27.

Like other castles in Syria, this has been suffered to fall into decay, and the only inhabitants are these crabbed and sinister Arabs, their flocks, and their dogs. They invite us to be gone, and it is high time we did so, for if we return to Acre by el Kabîreh, el Bŭssah, and ez Zîb, we have no time to spare. The path leads down the mountains diagonally for fifty minutes towards the north-west, over a wild rocky region called w'ar by the Arabs, and the word occurs very often in the Bible, and doubtless indicates the same sort of country. Thus David, at the instance of the prophet Gad, departed from the hold of Mizpeh of Moab, and came into the "forest [y'ar or w'ar] of Hareth."[1] These w'ar are not open forests, for the surface of the ground is too broken for that, but rocks piled on rocks, covered with prickly oak and other thorny coppice, which perplex the unhappy traveller who gets entangled amongst them. The natives, when they wish to deter you from attempting a given road, shout in your ear, "W'ar! w'ar!" with a harsh, guttural emphasis, which experience has taught me always to respect. And now, escaped from this w'ar, we descend into the beautiful vale of Kŭzrone, which comes from Tershîha and M'alia.

What fine fields of wheat! and they spread down the widening wady on either side to el Kabîreh on the edge of the plain.

There are two great fountains in that village; the stream from one of them is led directly into the present aqueduct of Acre, and never pauses until it reaches the courts of the houses, mosks, and baths in that city. The water of the other is confined in a reservoir or birkeh, like those at Râs el 'Ain, near Tyre, and drives the mills that are built against it. The cluster of hamlets below bears the name of Nahr, river, and abounds in mills, orchards, and vegetable gardens. Near it is seen the ancient aqueduct, covered with great masses of tufa, which not only proclaim the antiquity of the work, but also inform us that the water, like that at Râs el 'Ain, is far from pure.

The people say that the aqueduct was built by Jezzâr Pasha, and destroyed by Bonaparte — both are incorrect. It was a ruin ages before Jezzâr, and Bonaparte never destroyed such works. It can be traced along under the villages of el Ghabsîyeh and Sheikh Dâûd, and thence in a direct line towards Acre. The present aqueduct was made, it is said, by Suleimân Pasha. This is doubtful; he perhaps only repaired it. It runs much lower down the plain than the ancient one. This entire region, both in the plain and on the mountains, is full of ruins, which I have examined, but they are not important, so far as is known, and we have no time to devote to them to-day.

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[1] 1 Sam. xxii. 5.

The distance from here to Acre is not far from ten miles, and the aneroid gives one hundred and seventy feet as the elevation above the sea—quite sufficient to carry the water to the top of the highest house in the city.

We shall return by el Bŭssah, and thus take a look into the north-west corner of this fine plain. It abounds in antiquities beyond other parts even of this land of ruins, and in that we find the explanation of those old quarries on the hill above us. This daughter of Jabal says those nearest remains are called Khŭrbert esh Shwoizerîyeh—a very hard word to pronounce.

Why do you call that curly-headed Bedawîn by that name?

The Bible says that "Jabal was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle."[1] Now she dwells in one of those goat-hair tents on the mountain-side, and she is tending this drove of poverty-smitten cattle. That Biblical form of expression is still common. Any one who should now invent tents, or the custom of living in them, would be called the father not only of tents, but also of tent-dwelling; indeed, the Arabs call a person distinguished for any peculiarity the father of it. Thus, a man with a long beard is named abu dŭkn — father of a beard; and I have often heard myself called abu tangera—father of a saucepan—because the boys in the street fancied that my hat resembled that black article of kitchen furniture.

And now we are amongst the ruins of esh Shwoizerîyeh: look closely to your path if you would not plunge headlong into an old cistern. These ancient sites are perfectly honey-combed with them.

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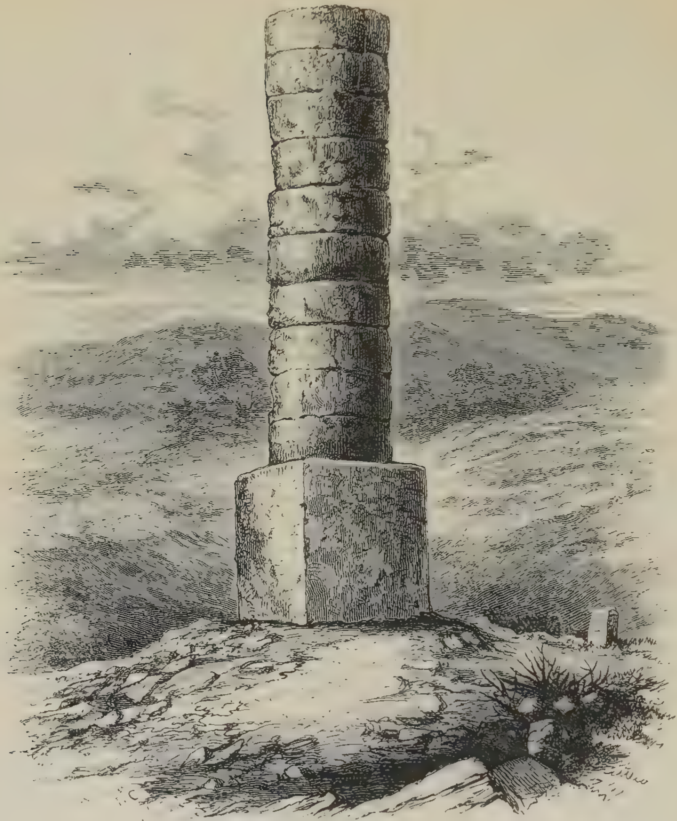
[1] Gen. iv. 20.



'AMÛD HŬMSÎN—COLUMN OF HŬMSÎN.

This entire region above us is full of ruins, amongst which I have spent days of agreeable excitement; but as none have names of historic notoriety, we shall pass them by, cross Wady el Kŭrn, and ride up to that column, which stands like a solitary sentinel of by-gone generations, and may have maintained its lonely watch over the plain for two thousand years.

The shaft is composed of eleven pieces, each three feet thick, and the base is nine feet high and ten feet square. The entire elevation of this singular column is therefore more than forty feet, and it is over sixteen feet in circumference. Of course it must have had a capital or something else on the top to give it symmetry, but how high no one can tell; nor when, by whom, or for what purpose the column was erected. Those who sought to immortalize their names or deeds by it have therefore failed. This column is now called 'Amûd Hŭmsîn, and also Minawat, from a collection of ruins in its neighborhood. Scattered over the hill-side below the column are the remains of a large town, but without a name.

From this to el Bŭssah is a little more than half an hour; but we shall not go any farther than to an ancient site called 'Ammarîyeh, from which much of the stone used in building el Bŭssah has been removed. They are doing so even now, and you see in this spot a striking proof of extreme antiquity. These men are digging out old foundations many feet deep in the soil, beneath an aged olive-tree which they are undermining. Now these were ancient ruins, buried thus deep under rubbish before this olive could have been planted, and the tree itself is probably several hundred years old. There is another very large ruin in the valley east of el Bŭssah called M'asûba, from which marble slabs and sarcophagi are also dug out, some of which have Greek inscriptions. And still farther up the country are other sites of ancient places, which I have examined on former occasions.

The road to 'Alma leads over that rocky mountain to the north-east, and it would take about an hour and a quarter to reach it. I have spent many days at 'Alma, and have made various excursions from it. One of the most interesting was on the occasion of a visit to the Castle of Kureîn—the Montfort of the Crusaders, according to Dr. Robinson—situated at the top of an isolated ridge on the south side of Wady el Kŭrn.

Passing southward from 'Alma down a ravine called 'Ain Hor, we reached Wady Benna in an hour. The village of Benna lies under lofty cliffs full of caverns, on the north side of the wady which trends round to the north-east towards Kûza. We then ascended a branch wady to the south-east, along a path which terminated at a large ruin called es Semakh, leaving us in the woods, where we soon got lost. After wandering about for some time, we discovered a Bedawy amongst the bushes, who threaded the tangled wood like an American Indian, and brought us out on the northern brink of Wady el Kŭrn opposite the castle. The descent of six hundred and ten feet to the bed of the river was more than difficult—really dangerous. One held the horse by the head, and two by the tail, to keep him from tumbling over the precipice, and with great care we all got safely down.

I was unable to make out the age and object of a building at the bottom of the wady below the castle. It is about one hundred feet long, and eighty high. The basement, a very strong vault, has above it a group of groined arches, mostly broken; they are apparently of Saracenic origin. A single granite column stops up the top of the stairway to a tower, but there is nothing about the latter to determine its character. A powerful dam once turned the water of the river into the basement of this curious edifice at the north-east corner. This favors the idea that the lower story at least was a mill, and in that case the upper part may have been a guard-house, though it was finished off in a more elaborate style than is common for such places. The dam would convert the river above it into an impassable fosse for that side of the hill on which the castle stands. There is a native tradition that a covered way led down to the river from the castle, and, as the distance is not great, the thing is possible, though not probable.

The ascent from that building to the top of the castle was extremely fatiguing. It is over six hundred feet, exceedingly steep, and covered with bushes and briers, through which one must force his way upward. Where the bold, sharp ridge of the castle joins the eastern mountain, it is only a few feet across from north to south, with ragged cliffs descending on either side to a great depth. Just there it is cut off by a broad and deep fosse, on the edge of which stands the first part of the fortifications.

The top of the ridge was widened by a wall built up from below to enlarge that part of the platform. That wall is very solid, and exhibits specimens of the so-called Jewish or Phœnician bevel. On the platform stood a tower built of well-cut large stones, three feet thick, and of various lengths up to ten feet. The ridge falls down rapidly towards the river, having its sides almost perpendicular. There are three other towers or castles, each lower than the one above, and also wider, for the hill bulges out as it descends, and the lowest of all encloses a considerable area. These castles were so connected as to form one fortress, and yet so isolated that each would have to be taken by itself. The second from the top has in it an octagonal pillar of polished stone, about eight feet high, with a projecting cornice, and over it stood eight demi-columns, one for each face of the pedestal, joined inwardly so as to form a single shaft. Above all was a cluster of arches, like those in the building at the river below the castle.

It is not easy to comprehend the motive for erecting a castle in such a place. If the road from ez Zîb passed that way to the regions of Upper Galilee, it would have served to command it; but there is no evidence that any such highway led up that wild gorge. It may have been a frontier castle of the Crusaders, built upon the site of one more ancient.

The ruins of the entire castle and the hill upon which it stands are now clothed with a fine forest of oak, terebinth, bay, and other trees, whose ranks ascend, shade above shade,

> A woody theatre of stateliest view;

and the undergrowth is a tangled net-work of briers and bushes, which makes it very difficult to explore the site. After groping about for two hours I was obliged to leave, though not half satisfied with my examination. Castle Hill is beautiful and imposing; a pyramid of green rising up towards heaven, with its gray old towers peering out here and there, as if to take a quiet look for themselves on the world around and below. And then the river gorge—how describe it? with its lofty ramparts, where

> Woods over woods, in gay theatric pride,

tower upwards towards the sky.

When I first climbed into the castle, I was delighted to see, quietly sitting amongst the ruins, a beautiful little cony. It had shown that wisdom in selecting the rocks for its refuge implied by David in Psalm civ. 18, and which Solomon commends in Proverbs xxx. 26: "The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks." I have seen them on the wild cliffs of the Lîtâny, below Blât, and also above the rocky pass of Râs el Abyad, on the Ladder of Tyre. In shape they resemble the rabbit, but are smaller, and of a dull russet color. Our friends of 'Alma call them tŭbsûn, and are well acquainted with their habits, as they are with those of many other animals rarely met with except in such rocky regions as this. Tŭbsûn appears to be a local name for the cony, which elsewhere is called waber.

You are doubtless aware that scientific writers assert that the Hebrew shaphan is not a cony at all.

EL WABER—THE CONY.

If the cony must be classed with the hare or the rabbit, the criticism is just; but it belongs to an entirely different family.[1] It is neither a rodent nor a ruminant, though from the constant grinding of its teeth, it, like the hare, has been supposed to belong to the ruminantia. In books on Natural History the cony is made to occupy a place intermediate between the rhinoceros and the hippo-

[1] Lev. xi. 5, 6; Deut. xiv. 7.

potamus, an association somewhat surprising and almost grotesque. Our timid little friends, sunning themselves on the cliffs of Wady el Kŭrn and those of the Lîtâny, would be terrified at the mere sight of their monstrous relatives of the river and the marsh.

In the clefts of a precipice overhanging Wady el Kŭrn swarms of bees made their home. The people of M'alia, several years ago, let a man down the face of the rock by ropes. He was entirely protected from the assaults of the bees, and extracted a large amount of honey; but was so dismayed by their number that he could not be induced to repeat the exploit. One is reminded by this incident of the expression concerning Israel in that farewell ode of Moses, Deut. xxxii. 13: "He made him to suck honey out of the rock." And Asaph, in the eighty-first Psalm, thus sings: "With honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee." Such allusions, and the statement that the meat of John the Baptist "was locusts and wild honey," prove that bees lived in the rocks long ago, just as they do now, and perhaps they were more common than at present.[1]

But to return to Wady el Kŭrn. Parting from my guides, I crossed over the hills in a south-easterly direction, and passing M'alia, once a walled town, and still showing specimens of ancient Phœnician work, I stopped for the night at Tershîha, half an hour farther on, and was hospitably entertained by the Greek priest of the village. Tershîha sounds ancient and Jewish, but the name does not occur in the Bible, nor in Josephus, who performed some of his warlike exploits in that neighborhood, and would not have avoided mentioning it had it then been a place of importance. There are few evidences of antiquity about it, and what are to be seen were brought, as I suppose, from the ruins of 'Alîa, on the edge of the pretty vale between Tershîha and M'alia.

'Alîa was once a considerable city, the remains of which still cover that part of the plain. It is unknown in history, but the village of M'alia seems to derive its name from it. There was an Allon in Naphtali, and 'Alîa may possibly be its representative. I saw there many good-looking girls, but remarkably brazen-faced for Moslems. Perhaps they borrowed brass from their head-dress.

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[1] Matt. iii. 4.

called semâdy, the most striking part of which consists of a thick roll of silver coins, carried from the top of the head down the cheeks and secured under the chin. Their fine features are therefore set within this metallic frame, and it is no great wonder if they cannot blush. I have not seen this peculiar head-dress in such perfection anywhere else. Some were said to weigh six pounds, but those of the same kind about Nazareth are much smaller.

I spent the morning looking about the village of Tershîha, which gives name to a sub-governmental district of which it is the centre. It may have about three thousand inhabitants, one-fifth Christians, the rest Muhammedans, who bear a very bad character. Their brutal manners and fierce fanaticism had been considerably ameliorated, it was said, through the influence of Sheikh 'Aly el Mughraby, a Moslem reformer, who had his residence there. He was one of the religious impostors to which this country is ever giving birth. The number of his disciples was stated as high as twenty thousand.

Like the Mormons, he sent forth apostles to call men to his new Terîkah, or new way, as it is named. They produced a great sensation in Sidon, where he had many followers. His most zealous apostle there spent one whole forenoon laboring most earnestly at the work of my conversion, but finally gave up in despair. It was an amusing episode in our quiet life, and the style of argument was curious, and very characteristic of the Oriental mind. It is an interesting fact, however, that a man like Sheikh 'Aly could venture on a reform which leaves Muhammed almost entirely out of the account, suffering only the name of Allah to be used in prayers and hymns—a sort of Moslem Protestantism.

He also inculcated charity, and respect to Christians, which was an important improvement in the tone of Moslem manners in this region. As to the moral reformation, of which I had heard so much, the specimens at Tershîha were far from satisfactory. The whole population seemed to me uncommonly profane, boorish, and insolent; still, their neighbors said it was a happy advance on the past, and ascribed the good work to Sheikh 'Aly. The sheikh himself I found dwelling very much at his ease, and caring little about the further spread of his Terîkah. From the lowest level of pinching poverty he had risen to comparative wealth; had a large harem, and in the enjoyment of his domestic paradise he had very much neglected the concerns of his followers.

In order to come in contact with the manners and customs of this people which best illustrate the Bible, one must resort to their homes in their native villages; must associate with them, and, as far as possible, become one of them. I was often struck with this thought during my long visits to 'Alma. On one occasion, owing to a protracted storm of wind and rain, I suffered from the constant and annoying illustration of that proverb of Solomon, "A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike. Whosoever hideth her hideth the wind, and the ointment of his right hand, which bewrayeth itself."[1] The force of this proverb is well understood in all its details in this country. Such rains as we then had thoroughly soak through the flat earthen roofs of the mountain houses, and the water descends in numberless leaks all over the room. This continual dropping—tuk, tuk—all day and all night, if not the most annoying thing in the world, can only be exceeded by the ceaseless clatter of a contentious woman.

That, too, I then experienced in its most aggravated manifestation. A quarrel arose between two neighbors about some trifling affair—a chicken, I believe—but it grew boisterous, and raged eleven hours by the watch. Through all these weary hours the "contentious woman" ceased not to scold, and scream, and curse in a style quite original, and so loud that the whole neighborhood was disturbed. She would rush into the room, then bound out of it, and fly round the court like a fury, throw off her tarbûsh, tear her hair, beat her breast, and wring her hands, screaming all the while at the top of her shrill voice. Sometimes she would snatch up her old shoe, fly at her enemy, and shake it under her very nose, trembling all the while in uncontrollable rage; nor could she be pacified until late in the evening, and then she continued muttering, like a thunder-storm passing away behind a distant mountain.

Certainly he that hideth such a virago hideth the wind. It would puzzle even Petruchio to tame such a shrew.

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[1] Prov. xxvii. 15, 16.

The reference to the wind has also a peculiar force in this country, especially on such promontories as the Ladder of Tyre, and during such gales as blew on that occasion. But there is another wind still more pertinent to the point in our proverb—the dry, hot sirocco. Who can either hide or abide it? I have felt its greatest power on the plain of Aleppo, and in the wadys about Hâsbeiya. The air becomes loaded with fine dust, which it whirls in rainless clouds hither and thither at its own wild will; it rushes down every gorge, bending and breaking the trees, and tugging at each individual leaf; it growls round the houses, runs riot with your clothes, and flies away with your hat; nor is there any escape from its impertinence. The eyes inflame, the lips blister, and the moisture of the body evaporates under the ceaseless pertinacity of this persecuting wind; you become languid, nervous, irritable, and despairing.

Eliphaz the Temanite had no doubt often suffered from this distressing blast, and hence his impatient question, "Should a wise man utter vain knowledge, and fill his belly with the east wind?"[1] Moses intensifies the threatened judgments for apostasy by reference to the phenomenon of these tempests: "The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed."[2] The Hebrews, by their residence in Egypt, and their long sojourn in the desert, could well understand and fully appreciate the significance of this grievous penalty, "Thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron."[3]

What do you understand to be the meaning of "the ointment of his right hand which bewrayeth itself," in that quotation from Proverbs regarding the contentious woman?

It refers to the custom of perfuming so common in ancient times, and not unfrequent now. The odor of musk and other "ointment" is so powerful that the very street along which persons so perfumed walk is highly scented. Such ointment cannot be concealed: it proclaims itself, as the Hebrew may be rendered, wherever it comes. The right hand is mentioned because it is most honorable, most used in anointing, and cannot be kept concealed, as all salutations, and the endless gestures in conversation, call it forth. The ointment of the right hand will surely bewray itself, and so will a contentious woman: she cannot be hid.

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[1] Job xv. 2.

[2] Deut. xxviii. 24.

[3] Deut. xxviii. 23.

Where and what place is 'Alma?

It is a small hamlet on the top of the Ladder of Tyre, about five miles from the sea-shore at Râs en Nâkûrah, and it is the only inhabited village on that part of the Ladder; but nearly every hill-top around it has a name and a ruin, some of which were towns, not villages.

It is a singular fact that those old sites are now appropriated by remnants of Arab tribes, who pitch their black tents amongst the trees and bushes which have overgrown the ruins. Whenever you see a clump of large oaks in that region, you may be sure that there stood a town, and there, too, is the Bedawîn's tent.

Another thing in regard to these oak-crowned sites is worthy of notice. They are almost always tells, either natural or artificial, or both combined, and this, I suppose, explains the meaning of Joshua xi. 13, which in the English translation is scarcely intelligible: "But as for the cities that stood still in their strength, Israel burned none of them, save Hazor only; that did Joshua burn." The Hebrew for "their strength" is their tells, and the Arabic gives the true rendering, "The cities standing on their tells." The narrative here refers to this particular region where these ancient sites generally occupy well-defined tells, and did, I suppose, at the time of the Conquest. The idea is not that "they stood still in their strength," so that Joshua could not burn them, but that the inhabitants were allowed to remain quietly in their hamlets, "standing on their tells" or artificial mounds, for it was not the wish of Joshua to utterly destroy the country.

The Arabs who now occupy such ruined sites cultivate the soil, and pay taxes like other citizens, and are therefore disowned and held in contempt by the regular sons of the Desert; nor will they intermarry with those degenerate tribes who choose to gain their bread by honest industry. But, then, these outcasts from true Bedawîn aristocracy have their own scale of nobility, and would scorn to give their daughters to the miserable native peasants who dwell in houses, and follow the ways and avocations of civilization. What a bundle of absurdities and contradictions is man! Those Arabs live in squalid poverty and filth, and yet are proud as Lucifer.

One night, while keeping a constant lookout for my own integrity, having cows on two sides of me, goats and sheep all around, and fowls overhead, I was greatly amused by the complaints of my host against those filthy Bedawîn. "The beasts," said he, "ma by'arifû jins en nudâfy"—"they don't know the nature of cleanliness!" Such testimony, person, place, and circumstances considered, was irresistible. I devoutly believed him.

But we may learn something from those tent-dwelling tillers of the soil, poor and despised though they be. They illustrate a custom amongst the agricultural population of the ancient Hebrews, from which came the familiar proverb, "To your tents, O Israel;" and perhaps the constant reference to dwelling in tents long after the children of Israel had been settled permanently in Palestine may have been founded on fact.[1]

Dhâher 'Abûd, for many years a native travelling doctor amongst the Arab tribes east of the Jordan, told me that the population, even of such considerable towns as es Salt and Kerak, pitch tents out in the country, and there spend their summers. He supposes that it was always the custom to a considerable extent, nor is this improbable. The ancestors of the Jews all dwelt in tents, and during the forty years immediately preceding their entrance into Palestine the whole nation lived in them; and it is extremely probable that many clung to their ancient customs, and spent most of their time in "tabernacles."

In fact, the peasants in the south of Palestine do thus spend their summers to this day, and, were I an Arab farmer, I would do the same. Gladly would I escape from the village, with its crowded houses, filthy within, and infested without by all manner of abominations, to the bright sun and sweet air, the joyous groves and broad fields of the open country. Nor are houses necessary to the farmer in that delightful climate. Isaac dwelt in tents, and yet he "sowed in that land, and received in the same year a hundredfold;" and I know no reason why many of his descendants might not have been tent-dwelling tillers of the soil.[2]

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[1] 1 Kings xii. 16.

[2] Gen. xxvi. 12.

As we intend to leave Acre and go into Galilee, we shall miss much of the route from Acre, over the Ladder of Tyre, to that ancient maritime city of the Phœnicians.

That is true; but while we are passing over this northern part of the plain of Acre towards ez Zîb, yonder on the sea-shore, I will describe it.

To one coming this way, the road follows the shore south of Tyre for about an hour, passing Râs el 'Ain, where are some of the most remarkable ancient reservoirs in the country, and from whence the plain of Tyre and the city itself were supplied with water. In another hour Nahr Azzîyeh is crossed near the remains of an old Roman bridge. This stream rises below Kefr Bir'im, passes by Hazîreh through Wady el 'Ayûn, and thence to the sea by a tortuous, wild, and wooded gorge. Fifteen minutes farther is a well called Medfeneh, south of which are ruins scattered along the shore, with no other name than that of the well; but just at the foot of Râs el Abyad is el Hŭmra, the site, probably, of a tower built to command the pass around that bold headland.

Râs el Abyad is the Promontorium Album of Pliny. The direction of the pass is east and west, and the Râs rises boldly overhead several hundred feet, in cliffs of white indurated marl, interlaced with seams of dark-colored flint. A path is cut in the cliff overhanging the sea for about a mile, and rising two hundred feet above its surface. It makes even a bold man nervous to look down to where the waves dash against the perpendicular rocks, and rush and roar through the hollow caverns. If you watch closely you will always see timid conies creeping about on those cliffs.

Near the top of the Râs is Kŭl'at esh Shem'a, a ruined castle of modern times. At the end of the pass the road turns south for a mile to the ruins of Iskanderîyeh, the Alexandroschene of the ancients; there is nothing about them, however, indicative of an age older than the time of the Crusaders. William of Tyre, in his History, lib. xi., sect. 29, 30, gives an account of the repairing of this place in A.D. 1116 by Baldwin, and he derives its name from Alexander the Great, and native tradition ascribes the road over Râs el Abyad to the same hand; but there was a road there long before Alexander's day, and others besides him have repaired it.

There are specimens of the old Roman road in that vicinity, and a fountain of delicious water, 'Ain Iskanderîyeh, flows out near the shore, most grateful to the weary traveller along this desolate coast: no doubt the ancient city of Alexandroschene owed its existence to that fountain. A mile farther south stands a solitary column on the hill-side, marking the site of a ruined temple and forsaken city. The place is now called Um el 'Amed, mother of columns, and the remains are extensive, spreading up the valley—broken columns, prostrate houses, sarcophagi, and rock tombs. Wady Hâmûl comes down from 'Alma to the sea at that point, but the road up the wady is nearly impracticable, from the dense jungle of bushes, briers, and ruins which choke that romantic valley. An aqueduct once led the water from Neb'a Hâmûl to Um el 'Amed, but it has long since been broken.

The coast from that place bends south-west for thirty minutes to Khân en Nâkûrah, east of which is a village of the same name; and on the shore stands one of St. Helena's towers, in good preservation, tenanted by flocks below, and hawks and owls above. From that khân the road lies along the shore westward for a mile, and then rising over the pass of Râs en Nâkûrah, the Scala Tyriorum, or Ladder of Tyre, descends by a zigzag path steeply to the sea, where the cape terminates in bold and picturesque precipices.

The entire cape between Tyre and Acre is about seven miles across, and has three distinct promontories: the first is Râs el Abyad, which does not project into the sea more than a mile beyond the general line of the coast; the second is Râs en Nâkûrah, the real Ladder, or Scala Tyriorum, and the last is Râs el Musheîrifeh, which is the highest of all, and shows boldest towards the sea, and hence has been often confounded with the true "Scala." After crossing a wady on an old Roman bridge half broken away, the path ascends by a most villanous track for half an hour, to the ancient tower called Burj el Musheîrifeh.

I am disposed to identify Musheîrifeh, and the fountain at its base of the same name, with the Misrephoth-maim, to which that part of the Canaanitish host which came from Dor and elsewhere fled from the battle of Merom; the route which the division of Jabin's army must have taken to escape Joshua's people and reach their home, would lead them to that safe and convenient halting-place on the shore.[1] The difficult pass, commanded by a castle, where the present Burj stands, would be an effectual barrier against their enemies, and the plain below in possession of Achzib, which the Jews did not subdue, would afford a suitable place for them to rest and refresh themselves after the fatigues of that disastrous day. The ancient and modern names are nearly identical in sound, and I believe in signification, and both may have been suggested by the bright and glowing color of those magnificent cliffs which overhang the sea.

Below the Burj are picturesque caves, into which the waves tumble with deafening roar. Above one of those caves there is said to be a long inscription. I once descended the face of the cliff to the shore, and by creeping along a shelf of the rock several hundred feet in length, and not more than six inches wide in some places, I got within a few yards of the inscription. I had tried to reach it by boat several times, but the sea was always too rough. The result of this closer study left me in doubt whether, after all, it was not one of those unaccountable freaks of Nature, whose hand seems occasionally to scribble and sketch on the wild cliffs of the mountains, as if on purpose to puzzle antiquarians. If it be writing, there was a surface about fifteen feet square covered with some fifty lines of the same length originally, but many of them are now partially worn away. Ibrahim Pasha, the latest Egyptian potentate in possession of Acre, came to this place in a boat with a company of French savants, but neither could they get near enough to make anything out of it.

I found many petrified star-fish mingled in the white rock of the cliffs, and they seemed to be about equally diffused through the entire strata of the cape. The rock is intensely hard, and white as chalk.

From the fountain at the foot of Râs el Musheîrifeh it is an hour to ez Zîb, the modern representative of ancient Achzib, the Ecdippa of Roman geographers.[2] Achzib was given to Asher, but seems never to have been in the possession of that tribe.[3] The river from Wady el Kŭrn enters the sea near ez Zîb. That village stands on a mound, mainly of rubbish, and it has evident traces of antiquity about it, though it could never have been a large place. On the sea-shore there are small creeks, which afford a partial shelter for boats, and this was probably the reason for building a city at that point. A grove of palm-trees, sheltering pyramids of beehives, will attract attention as the traveller hastens on to reach the regular road to Acre at el Mezra'ah, where he will be sure to rest and regale himself with oranges and good water. He will there have an excellent view of the aqueduct which conveys water from Kabîreh to Acre. In half an hour more he will be at el Bahjeh, the dilapidated palace of Abdallah Pasha, two miles from Acre. The whole distance from Tyre is about twenty-eight miles.

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[1] Josh. xi. 8; xiii. 6.

[2] Josh. xix. 29.

[3] Judges i. 31.

But if we do not urge on our jaded steeds, we will be shut out of Acre, for the gate closes at sunset, and waits for no man.

VIII.

ACRE TO NAZARETH.

Different Routes from Acre to Nazareth.—Bethlehem.—Simonias.—The Bible and the Country.—Galilee the Earthly Home of the God-Man.—Veneration due to Sacred Shrines.—Modern Superstitions derived from Ancient Customs.—The Bones of Elisha reviving a Dead Man.—"Those Holy Fields."—Tell Birweh.—Watering with the Foot.—Villages in Wady Sha'ab.—Mejdel Kerûm.—Gabera.—Deir el As'ad.—El Ba'ineh.—Nuhf.—Seijûr.—The East the Land of Sheep in Ancient and in Modern Times.—Resemblance of Modern Shepherds to those of the Patriarchs.—Passage of Vast Flocks from the North through the Land.—The Ride from er Râmeh to Meirôn.—Natural Beauty of "the Lot of Naphtali."—Olive-trees attacked by Locusts.—El Ferrâdy.—Kefr 'Anân.—Khŭrbet Hâzûr.—Ancient Sites.—View over the Sea of Galilee and the Hills of Naphtali.—Wady Leîmôn.—Road from er Râmeh to el Mŭghâr.—Bedawîn Shepherds in Wady Sellâmeh.—Visit to a Friend at el Mŭghâr.—Farming of Villages.—Results of Agricultural Enterprise.—Olive-trees surrounded by Thorny Jungles.—Taxation.—Rameh of Naphtali.—En-hazor.—Khŭrbet Sellâmeh, Selamis.—Wady er Rŭbŭdîyeh.—'Arrabeh.—Deir Hanna.—Sŭkhnîn, Sogane.—Yâkûk, Hukkok.—Wŭkala, or Agents, in the Time of David and Solomon, and those of the Present Day.—Storehouses in the Fields.—Ruinous System of Taxation.—Laws of Moses regarding Vicious Oxen.—Mosaic Legislation commended by Josephus.—Uncovered Pits.—Solomon's Rebuke of the Sluggard.—The Ant and the Overseer.—The Ant and the Improvident.—Herodotus and the Ants in India.—Proverbs of Solomon regarding the Slothful.—Arab Illustration of Laziness.—"The Vineyard of the Man void of Understanding."—Manufacture of Olive-oil, Ancient and Modern.—Treading the Olives.—Blight and Mildew believed to be Divine Judgments.—Physical Features of the Land of Canaan adapted to the Purposes of Divine Revelation.—Cutting up Mallows by the Bushes.—The Hebrew Malluach.—"The Axe laid unto the Root of the Trees."—"The Grass of the Field cast into the Oven."—Burning of Thorns and Briers.—Kindling Fire near Wheat-fields.—Firing Wheat-fields punished with Death by the Bedawîn.—Kabûl, Chabolo.—One of the "twenty Cities" given to Hiram.—Jefât, Jotapata.—Besieged by Vespasian.—Capture of Josephus.—Burning of Locusts.—The Scourge of Locusts.—Biblical Allusions to Locusts.—"Locusts and Wild Honey" the Meat of John the Baptist.—'Abilîn.—Wady 'Abilîn, Jiphthah-el.—Oak Woods.—Shefa 'Omar.—Plain of el Bŭttauf.—Rŭmmâneh, Rimmon.—Khŭrbet

Kâna, Cana of Galilee.—Nathanael, "an Israelite indeed."—Jesus at Cana of Galilee.—Villages around el Bŭttauf.—Beehives.—Offering of "First Fruits."—Seffûrieh, Sepphoris.—Joachim and Anna.—Church of the Virgin.—Castle at Seffûrieh.—From Seffûrieh to Nazareth.

May 15th.

THE distance from Acre to Nazareth is about twenty-two miles, more or less, according to the route selected. One road leads diagonally across the plain; and by taking that we might visit Beit Lahm, marking the site of Bethlehem of Zebulun, a place of no importance, and but once mentioned in the Bible,[1] and then proceed to Semûnieh, the ancient Simonias, where a futile attempt was made by the Romans to capture Josephus, and from there to Yâfa and Nazareth.[2] The regular road passes by Tell Kîsôn, et Tîreh, and 'Abilîn to Seffûrieh. We will keep farther north by el Birweh and Kabûl, and thence over the mountain along a route not followed by ordinary tourists.

Acre is a positive prison to both soul and body, and it is delightful to escape from it and continue our tour through the land. It seems to me that to read the Bible to the best advantage one must be in the open country. When God would talk with Abraham, "He brought him forth abroad," and abroad we must go to meet and to hold converse with the Lord our Maker.[3]

There is more in your remark than would be likely to strike the careless ear. The Bible is not a city book; its scenes are mostly laid in the country—its themes are suggested by it, and its illustrations are drawn from the same source; there it was thought, felt, spoken, enacted, and there much of it was written. We are scarcely introduced to city life at all for the first three thousand years of Biblical chronology. The Pentateuch was composed in tents during Israel's long sojourn in the wilderness, and in after-times the reader of the Holy Book is led forth to dwell in tabernacles with the patriarchs, or in deserts with the prophets and the apostles. The poets also, and sweet singers of Israel, commune almost exclusively with Nature, her scenes, and her scenery; from thence they draw their imagery, if not their inspiration.

The same is eminently true of the earthly life of our blessed Saviour; and he who would bring his spirit most happily into communion with this Divine Teacher must follow him afield, must sit on the mountain-side and hear him preach, must stand on the shore of Gennesaret and listen to the gracious words which proceed out of his mouth, must walk with him from village to village, and witness his miracles of healing mercy, and his tears of divine compassion. To reproduce and realize all this, we need the country, and best of all, *this* country; and if our Biblical studies smell of the dew of herbs and of the breath of morning rather than of the midnight lamp, I would have it so.

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[1] Josh. xix. 15.

[2] Jos. Vita, § 24.

[3] Gen. xv. 5.

They will be in closer correspondence thereby with the inspired teachers, and more true also to the actual circumstances under which they have been pursued.

We do, in fact, read, and study, and worship in Nature's temple, where God "hath set a tabernacle for the sun," and made a way for the moon, with her starry train, to walk by night. In this many-aisled temple, eye, and ear, and heart, and spirit share in the solemn worship. I delight to linger there, to hear the rustling wind wake the echoes that sleep in the wadys, and the softer melodies of brooks which run amongst the hills. It is delightful at early morn to breathe the air loaded with odors, and perfumed from countless flowers, sweet with the dewy baptism of the night. And I love the flock-covered fields, and woods with singing birds, and vales full to the brim and running over with golden light from the setting sun, when a thousand voices call to prayer, and praise ascends like clouds of incense to the eternal throne.

We are going up to Galilee to-day, the earthly home of the God-Man, where he lived and toiled for thirty years. It were no idle superstition to take off the shoes of worldliness and sin as we enter that sacred territory where he taught those lessons of divine wisdom which we seek to study and explain.

Do you think it wise or Christian to surrender one's mind to that reverential mood which leads men to attach special sanctity to places where prophets and saints have dwelt, and made memorable by their noble deeds?

A difficult and comprehensive question. The prompting principle is far too closely entwined with the inner sanctities of man's moral nature ever to be entirely eradicated. There are spiritual "high places" where men will ever continue to rear altars and burn incense. It is useless to ignore their existence—it might possibly be sacrilegious utterly to overthrow them. We may moralize, philosophize, and even theologize as we please, and still men will go on all the same to erect monuments, and build temples, and make pilgrimages to the birthplace, the home, and the tomb of prophet, saint, poet, and hero.

If kings, nobles, and ministers of the Gospel crowd to the place where Shakspeare was born, or died, or lies buried, and there weep and tremble, should we wonder that the less cultivated and less sophisticated will do the same at the tomb of the sacred prophet and the shrine of the holy seer? We should not tolerate, and even participate in the one, and yet condemn the other.

Can we surround Plymouth Rock with reverential memories because our forefathers landed there two hundred and fifty years ago, or visit with befitting emotion the mausoleum of a kindred nation's heroes, and at the same time ridicule the Oriental who approaches Sinai with awe, or makes long pilgrimages to Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron, Nazareth, Tiberias, and other places where holy men lived, wrought mighty miracles, and revealed to man the mysteries of God and eternity, and where they often sealed their testimony with their blood? I, at least, cannot be so inconsistent and unjust. Still, the tendency should be closely watched; for there is no end to the absurdities into which it will beguile the credulous or the imaginative.

A comparison of ancient Bible customs with what in our day we call superstitions will disclose the rather startling fact that the latter have their counterpart in the former. Thus Jacob had a remarkable vision; the place was ever after held sacred, and consecrated to religious rites. Moses put off his shoes at the command of the Lord, and the chapel of the "burning bush" is never visited with sandalled foot; and so does the Oriental put off his shoes wherever the presence of God has been manifested, or is supposed still to be present in any special manner. The Jews were forbidden to enter certain sacred places, or even to look upon certain things invested with peculiar sanctity. And thus, at this day, every sect in this land has the counterparts of all these things.

The material objects connected with the working of miracles had, in ancient times, transferred to them a portion of the sanctity and reverence due to him who used them, or to that divine power which was transmitted through them. This applied not only to the staves, robes, and mantles of prophets while living, but to the same things, to their bones also, and even to their very gravestones, when dead. Elisha took up Elijah's mantle and smote the Jordan, saying, "Where is the Lord God of Elijah?" He afterwards sent Gehazi to lay his staff on the dead son of the Shunammite. It is now common to bind upon, or wrap round the sick, some part of the robes of reputed saints, in the belief that healing virtue will be communicated from it. The same faith, or rather feeling, led the people to bring "forth the sick into the streets, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them."[1] And so from the body of Paul "were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them."[2]

Even that wonderful superstition about relics, and the miraculous powers of the bones of dead saints, is not without an antecedent reality in Bible history upon which are based its stupendous absurdities. We read in 2 Kings xiii. 21, that people carrying a dead man to his grave, being frightened by a company of Moabites, cast the body "into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet."

This train of comparisons might be indefinitely extended, and abundantly substantiated by facts, for there is scarcely a superstition amongst this people whose origin may not be traced far back to Bible times. And, moreover, when met with in those oldest records, it is frequently not at its first institution that we see it, but as a custom whose beginning is concealed in the twilight of remote antiquity. Now, to a certain degree, the feeling which gives rise to the "reverential esteem of things sacred" is natural and innocent, if not even commendable.

To one who really believes the evangelical narratives, for example, to whom the incidents are facts and not fables, the region

[1] Acts v. 15.

[2] Acts xix. 12.

we are about to enter will inevitably be invested with a sacredness which belongs to no other. It must be so. If any one visits these localities without being conscious of such reverence, it is simply because a latent unbelief has transferred the stupendous facts into the category of dreamy myths. No one can believe that here his Lord and his Redeemer really lived, and taught, and wrought miracles, and yet experience no other emotion than such as ordinary places awaken. Least of all can they do so to whom that "man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," is the one "altogether lovely, the chiefest among ten thousand." It would argue a strange apathy indeed if we could tread

> Those holy fields,
> Over whose acres walk'd those blessed feet,
> Which fourteen hundred years ago were nail'd,
> For our advantage, on the bitter cross,[1]

or ascend the mountains where he so often retired to meditate and pray with careless indifference, and without emotion.

We study to-day no common lesson of earth's geography. Everything is interesting and important. Let us, therefore, suffer nothing to pass unnoticed.

You are quite correct, and we may begin with this singular tell on our right. It stands at the very threshold of that country from which our Lord was called a Galilean. The modern name is Tell Birweh, from the village above it on the southern ridge. It is one hundred and twelve feet high, eight hundred and eighty-eight paces round the base, and one hundred and eighty-six paces across at the top. It was once walled and covered with buildings, and was probably fortified, so as to command the entrance into Galilee through this fine valley east of it.

The village shows signs of Phœnician or Jewish origin, and on the tell may have stood a frontier castle, held by the latter to prevent the Canaanites of Acre from penetrating into the interior. There is an inexhaustible well of sweet water near the south-western base of this tell, and one object in erecting the castle upon it may have been to secure this indispensable necessity of life. There are now more than three hundred head of cattle, besides goats and sheep, waiting around the large birkeh near it for their turn at the troughs, which are arranged around its three sides.

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[1] Shakspeare, Henry IV. Act 1.

See that man seated above the well, and turning the wheel that raises the water, pulling the upper part towards him with his hands, and pushing with his feet upon the lower. The well being only a few feet deep, he lifts a large quantity of water in this way, sending a fine stream into the troughs to refresh the thirsty flocks. When the birkeh, or pool, is full, the water is drawn off to irrigate a few vegetable gardens in the vale below.

This is one way certainly of watering with the foot a garden of herbs, though probably not much resembling the operation mentioned in Deuteronomy, as an item in the hard work required of the Hebrews in Egypt.[1]

Wady Sha'ab below us, called also Wady Halazôn, inclines somewhat to the south-east, and yonder is Mî'ar, high up on the southern side of it. That large village in Wady Sha'ab is Dâmôn, and farther south, towards 'Abelîn, is er Ruweis; above it is Tŭmrah, and higher still is Kabûl. Over the mountain ridge east of Kabûl are the ruins of Jefât, identified with the Jotapata of Josephus, and, I think, correctly.

From Tell Birweh a road leads up eastward into the level plain of Mejdel Kerûm, and onward through a part of Upper Galilee, abounding in ancient sites, and in scenery of great beauty. Our present route will not lead us that way, so I will give you an account of a visit I once made to Meirôn and el Mughâr, a large village in the centre of that region.

The first village on the road from Tell Birweh, after reaching the top of the ascent through a gap in the mountain, is Mejdel Kerûm. Its white-domed muzâr over the tomb of a Moslem saint presents a striking appearance, but there are no ancient remains in the place. The ruins of Gabara lie over the hill to the south-east about three miles from Mejdel Kerûm, at the modern village of Kŭbarah. It was celebrated in the wars of Josephus, and was then an important town of Galilee. Farther east are Deir el As'ad and el Ba'ineh close together; they have large remains of antiquity about them—more, indeed, than are to be found in most of these

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[1] Deut. xi. 10.

Galilean villages. A rather blind path along the base of the northern mountains for a mile due east leads to Nuhf, below which is the regular road up the valley to Seijûr. Both these are ancient sites.

Near Seijûr I was met by a large flock of sheep wending its way down the valley. I was surprised to encounter such a flock on that unfrequented path. Several months before they started, according to their shepherd, from the plains around and south of the head-waters of the Euphrates, and were then on their way to Acre, and other towns along the coast.

The East has ever been the land of sheep. Job had fourteen thousand, and Solomon sacrificed one hundred and twenty thousand at the dedication of the Temple.[1] Nor will these figures seem incredible when compared with the number of sheep which now exist in the whole country. Every year flocks of sheep are brought down from the north in such multitudes as to confound the imagination. When the interior route is unsafe, all have to pass along the sea-board. During the months of November and December the whole line of coast is covered with them; they come from Northern Syria and from Mesopotamia, and their shepherds, in dress, manners, and language, I believe, closely resemble those of Abraham, Jacob, and Job.

The shepherds "put a space betwixt drove and drove," and then "lead on softly," as Jacob's shepherds did.[2] If overdriven, many of the flock die, and even with the greatest care some give out, and, to prevent their dying by the way-side, are slaughtered and sold to the poor, or are eaten by the shepherds themselves. The flocks are also constantly decreasing, as they go south by sales on all occasions, and thus the whole country is supplied. How vast must be the numbers when they first set out from the distant plains of the Euphrates! Indeed, those northern regions especially abound in sheep, and hence the supply never fails. When such large flocks came to be watered in places where wells were scarce, it is no wonder that there should have been great strife in regard to their possession, as we learn from patriarchal history.[3]

The road from Seijûr passes on eastward below er Râmeh through extensive olive-groves, left in many places to run wild in the midst of a dense jungle of prickly oak and thorny bushes. To those who have leisure for the excursion, and a desire to enjoy varied and magnificent scenery, I recommend the route from er Râmeh through the long valley east of it, and over the wild mountains northward to the remarkable synagogue at Meirôn.

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[1] Job xlii. 12; 1 Kings viii. 63.

[2] Gen. xxxii. 16.

[3] Gen. xiii. 7; xxvi. 20, 21

The ride from er Râmeh to Meirôn was to me a new revelation of the beauty and grandeur of "the sixth lot" that "came out to the children of Naphtali."[1] Stopping for an hour below er Râmeh to take a photograph of the village, we continued our ride eastward for several miles amongst fine olive-trees, some of which had been sadly scorched by setting fire to the thorny thickets around them to destroy the locusts, reminding me of the man who burnt his barn to get rid of the rats. The locusts had been so numerous and ravenous that they attacked even the olive-trees, and the owners had thought it better to singe them, rather than lose the entire crop of olives.

That whole region abounds in ancient sites and in modern villages. Passing el Ferrâdy, we saw Kefr 'Anân below it, embowered and nearly concealed in a verdant forest. Khŭrbet Hâzûr, a ruin, is on the northern side of a tell of the same name above el Mŭghâr, and there are other ruined sites hidden away amongst olive-groves in that mountain region. The explorer searching carefully every part of that region will be able to identify the sites of nearly all the towns given to Naphtali, and also those places mentioned by Josephus in his Galilean conflicts with the Romans.

Ascending a well-wooded wady north of el Ferrâdy, we came to a fine fountain sufficiently powerful to drive the succession of picturesque mills in the valley below. From that place the ascent was winding, and very steep, to the top of the ridge north-east of el Ferrâdy, revealing, as we rose higher and higher, prospects of surprising extent and surpassing beauty, over the Sea of Galilee and the green hills of Naphtali, far too comprehensive to mention in detail. Tabor seemed quite near, and the Horns of Hattîn appeared to be directly beneath on the south. We reached the top of the ridge in an hour, and looked down into the deep chasm of Wady Leîmôn, with Safed—"a city that is set on a hill," that could not be hid—far away to the north-east. After riding along the western ridge for an hour and a half above Wady Leîmôn, we dismounted at the synagogue of Meirôn.

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[1] Josh. xix. 32.

This incidental trip to Meirôn having led us, in thought at least, quite away from el Mŭghâr, we will return, in imagination, to er Râmeh. The road from thence to el Mŭghâr turns southward around the base of the mountain into the pretty Wady Sellâmeh, in which are fine fountains that drive five or six mills hidden in the romantic ravine below the village of el Mŭghâr. The green hills on either side of the wady were dotted with Bedawîn tents; and the shouts of those wild men to their lagging flocks, and their singular call to the camels scattered over the country, startled the ear. There game abounds, and on every side the red-legged partridge calls responsive to his mates: it is thus they announce the dawn of day, or welcome the deepening twilight. The path now bent round to the east, having the broad Wady Sellâmeh on the right, and in front, upon the mountain side, the village of el Mŭghâr.

My visit was made to a friend who had rented or farmed of the Government the village, and the extensive lands belonging to it, and was carrying on agricultural operations of various kinds. It gave me an opportunity to observe the manners and customs of the people, and their methods of farming. In conversation with him, I also learned many things of interest in regard to that part of Galilee, which had been unknown to me previous to that visit.

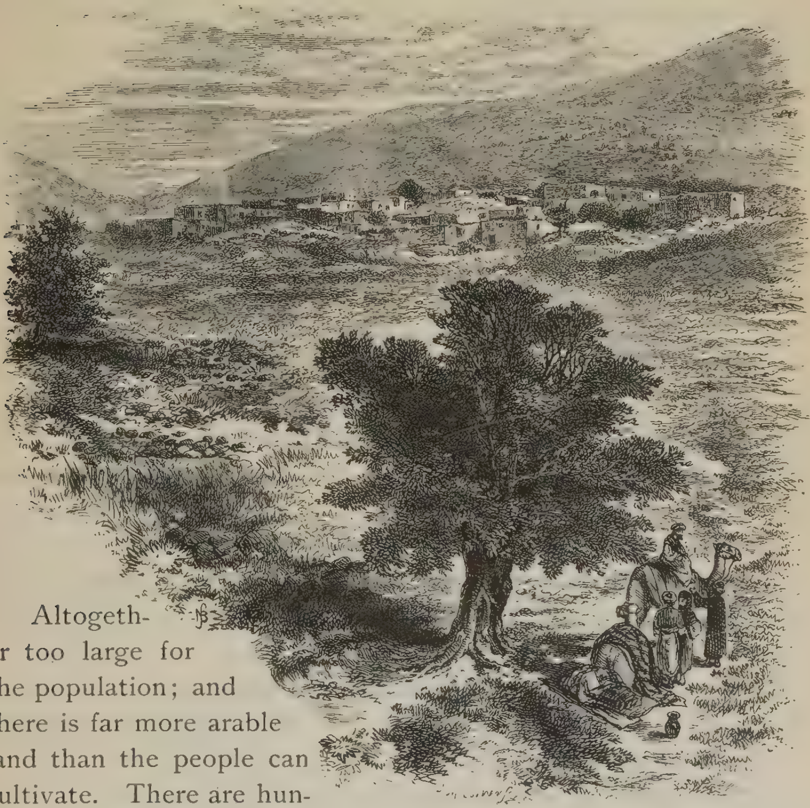
In the evening, after having partaken of his generous hospitality, and answered all inquiries about mutual friends and the political events of the day, he explained the nature and practical results of his farming enterprise.

I will now recount the conversation that took place between us during my stay at el Mŭghâr.

This is all new territory to me, and in appearance your surroundings are somewhat primitive and wild. You ought to make large profits to remunerate you for this rough-and-tumble life amongst these fellaheen.

I do not find it disagreeable. I am busy all day long; the place is healthy, the people respectful and easily managed, and the proceeds of this farming operation quite satisfactory. We are nearly through with oil-pressing; and, although the crows have destroyed many thousand piastres worth of olives, we shall still make a handsome profit.

The olive-orchards, I see, are very extensive.



ER RÂMEH—RAMAH OF NAPHTALI.

Altogether too large for the population; and there is far more arable land than the people can cultivate. There are hundreds of olive-trees so completely surrounded by thorny jungle that we cannot gather what grows on them. If this jungle were cleared away, and the land properly cultivated, we should, I believe, double the crop. I am doing something with that object in view, but these people are so lazy that but slow progress is made; in fact, they are afraid to increase the number of productive trees, lest their taxes should be raised upon them. Thus a bad government paralyzes all desire to improve.

What are these people?

Druses and Greek Catholics; and the same mixing of sects prevails in Râmeh and other places.

Râmeh seems to be a large and important village; the surrounding orchards are extensive and flourishing, and its well-built houses are picturesquely grouped near the foot of the mountain above it on the north.

It is about the same size as el Mŭghâr. The people are very anxious that I should farm their village also, but I have already quite as much on my hands as I can manage.

I suppose it is the Rameh of Naphtali, and the ruin above your village at 'Ain Hâzûr may mark the site of En-hazor, given to the same tribe.[1]

Indeed! I did not know that our place was mentioned in the Bible.

El Mŭghâr is not, but En-hazor is. Is there any ruin of interest in the broad wady south of you?

Yes; one called Khŭrbet Sellâmeh, between this and Deir Hanna, which place you must have seen to the south-west as you came towards our village.

There was a town called Selamis in this neighborhood, which was fortified by Josephus,[2] and Khŭrbet Sellâmeh probably marks the site of that place. Is Wady Sellâmeh ever called Wady er Rŭbûdîyeh?

The ruined village of er Rŭbûdîyeh is an hour and a half to the south-east of us, and between it and the Lake of Tiberias the wady takes the name of that village.

The village of 'Arrabeh must be somewhere in this region.

It is west of Deir Hanna, on the southern side of the wady. You ought to ride over to the Deir. The dilapidated castle and fortifications built by Dâher el 'Omar of Acre are worth visiting. Farther west is Sŭkhnîn.

That is probably the place which has been identified with Sogane, mentioned several times by Josephus.

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[1] Josh. xix. 36, 37.

[2] Jos. B. J. ii. xx. 6; Jos. Vita, § 37.

Yâkûk is east of us, and directly above the plain of Gennesaret. The similarity of name suggests that it is the site of the Hukkok given to Naphtali, but I think this doubtful.[1]

Do you find much trouble in conducting agricultural operations amongst this people?

The greatest difficulties arise from the dishonesty of the agents, or wŭkala. Though I am on the ground, and watch everything closely, yet those men rob me right and left. I lose most by the peculations of those who oversee the gathering of olives, and, in the time of threshing, unless I look strictly after that operation in person, I would be robbed of a large part of my harvest. The emirs and sheikhs who commit this oversight to their servants, and the Government that deputes officers to collect its portion from the public lands, of course suffer still more severely.

No doubt; and yet the system followed by the present Government for gathering up the produce of the country seems to be very ancient. Most of the kings of Judah and Israel engaged largely in agriculture. Besides arable lands for tillage, they had vineyards, and olive-yards, and flocks, and camels, and asses; and they had agents also like your wŭkala, and doubtless just as dishonest and oppressive. In 1 Chronicles xxvii. 25–31 we have a full list of the men appointed by David over vineyards, over olive-trees, and even over the sycamores, whose fruit is now generally given to the poor: Jehonathan was over the storehouses in the fields. In the Hûleh I saw large low huts built in the open country to store away the produce directly from the threshing-floors, thence to be carried home, as occasion required. Such, I suppose, were David's storehouses in the fields.

The reigning power in this country seems always to have pursued the ruinous system of confiscating lands and property, and retaining possession of them, very much as the Turkish Government does now.

The excuse for that agricultural policy in ancient times may have been that the amount of money circulating amongst a people entirely agricultural or pastoral was small; the king must, therefore, necessarily have taken his taxes in kind, and depended for a large portion of his revenues upon the produce of the royal domains. Solomon adopted the same system, I suppose, "and had twelve officers over all Israel, which provided victuals for the king and his household; each man his month in a year made provision." Ahimaaz, who married one of the king's many daughters, was over this region in Naphtali.[1]

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[1] Josh. xix. 34.

But the Turkish Government is pressed by no such necessity. The oppressive and ruinous system, by which large tracts of fertile territory are converted into mere deserts, ought to be abolished, and the government lands sold to those who cultivate the soil.

We encountered a drove of cattle to-day, some of which were fighting furiously, and the herdsman, endeavoring to part them, was in danger of being gored to death by one of the belligerents. I had imagined that the cattle of this country must have greatly degenerated since the days when Moses thought it necessary to ordain that the ox which gored a man should be stoned, and his carcass thrown away; and if he killed any one, and was previously known to be vicious, the owner also should be put to death, because he did not keep him in.[2]

Danger from this source has not ceased, especially amongst the half-wild droves that range over the luxuriant pastures in certain parts of the country. And the law of Moses would be still more in place which ordained that, "if one man's ox hurt another's, that he die; then they shall sell the live ox, and divide the money of it; and the dead ox also they shall divide."[3] If that admirable statute were faithfully administered now, it would prevent many angry, and sometimes fatal, feuds between herdsmen, and at the same time would be a very fair adjustment of the questions of equity that grow out of such accidents.

Josephus very justly expatiates upon the wisdom and humanity of their great law-giver, shown in minute regulations of this nature; and he gives as instances not only these ordinances which we have noticed, but also another, of the necessity for which I have often had practical illustration. Founding his remark upon Exodus xxi. 33, 34, he says, "Let those that dig a well or a pit be careful to lay planks over them, and so keep them shut up, not in order to

[1] 1 Kings iv. 15.

[2] Exod. xxi. 28–32.

[3] Exod. xxi. 35.

hinder any persons from drawing water, but that there may be no danger of falling into them.[1]

A friend of mine lost a valuable horse in that way; and, according to the Mosaic law, the owner of the pit should have paid the price of the horse.[2]

I have been astonished at the recklessness with which wells and pits are left uncovered and unprotected all over this country. It argues a disregard of life which is highly criminal. I once saw a blind man walk right into one of these unprotected wells. He fell to the bottom; but, as it was soft sand, he was more frightened than hurt. David complains, metaphorically, that men digged pits, and left them open on purpose to destroy the innocent.[3]

The next day I had a long ramble over the domains of my friend, enjoying the bright morning and the charming scenery. The prospect over the hills, and down the broad Wady Sellâmeh, and the ravine of Rŭbŭdîyeh to the Lake of Tiberias, was very beautiful. But much land lies waste that might be tilled, and it was sad to see so many olive-trees entangled in jungles of thorns and bushes.

Much of this is owing to the laziness of the people. A few are tolerably industrious, but the majority are far otherwise.

Laziness seems to have been a very prevalent vice in this country from days of old, giving rise to a multitude of popular proverbs, some of which the Wise Man has preserved in his collection. Indeed, there is scarcely any other subject so often mentioned, or so richly and scornfully illustrated by Solomon. His rebuke of the sluggard, drawn from the habits of the ant, is very appropriate and suggestive.[4] We need not "consider her ways" in general, for all must now be familiar with them. There are some circumstances, however, alluded to in that rebuke which must have been suggested by actual experience of life in this country. Thus the fact that the ant will faithfully and perseveringly work without "guide, overseer, or ruler," is very striking.

When I began to employ workmen in this country, nothing annoyed me more than the necessity to hire also an overseer, or to fulfil that office myself. But I soon found that this was universal, and strictly necessary. Without an overseer very little work would be done, and nothing as it should be. The workmen, in every way unlike the ant, will not work at all unless directed by an overseer, who is himself a perfect specimen of laziness. He does nothing but smoke his pipe, order this one, scold that other, and discuss the how and the why with the men themselves, or with passers-by, who are strangely prone to enter earnestly into everybody's business but their own. This overseeing often costs more than the work overseen. Now, the ants manage far better. Every one attends to his own business, and does it well.

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[1] Jos. iv. viii. 37.

[2] Exod. xxi. 34.

[3] Psa. ix. 15; xxxv. 7, 8.

[4] Prov. vi. 6–11

In another respect these industrious creatures read a very necessary lesson to the improvident Oriental. In all warm climates there is a ruinous want of calculation and forecast. Having enough for the current day, men are reckless as to the future. The idea of sickness, misfortune, or the necessities of old age exercises but little influence; they are not provident "to lay up for a rainy day" or dreary winter. Yet those occasions come upon them, and they wake to want and pinching poverty. The ant "provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest." All summer long, and especially in harvest, every denizen of their populous habitations is busy.

As we walk or ride over the plains, we notice paths leading in all directions from their subterranean granaries; at first broad, clean, and smooth, like roads near a city, but constantly branching off into smaller and less distinct, until they disappear in the herbage of the plain. Along these converging paths hurry thousands of ants, an unbroken column of busy beings, going in search of, or returning with, their food for future need: there is no loitering or jostling, and no intermeddling with others. No thoroughfares of the largest city are so crowded or better conducted than those highways to the ant-hills. Ants are great robbers, however, and plunder by night as well as by day. The farmer must keep a sharp lookout to his threshing-floor in harvest, or they will abstract a large quantity of grain in a single night.

Speaking of ants, what could have induced Herodotus to write that absurd story about the ants in India, "larger than a fox and less than a dog," which dug up gold, and tore to pieces those who came to gather it, and much more to the same purport?

As to Herodotus, he was a most courageous retailer of anecdotes, and used the privilege of great travellers without reserve. That Pliny should quote this fable is truly surprising.

How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? It is curious to notice how intensely Solomon hated this vice, and in how many ways he gave expression to his contempt of the sluggard. Thus, "The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting."[1] The most good-for-nothing fellow may be roused by the excitement of the chase, but, when that violent stimulus is past, he is too indolent even to roast the game he has taken with so much toil. Again, "The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing."[2] He "is brother to him that is a great waster;"[3] "he coveteth greedily all day long," "for his hands refuse to labour."[4] "The way of the slothful man is as a hedge of thorns."[5] It lacerates and entangles the miserable wretch. Slothfulness is expert in raising objections and imagining dangers. "There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets."[6]

"The sluggard will not plough by reason of the cold;" and as ploughing and sowing cannot be carried on until the winter rains commence, he neglects altogether to sow his fields; "therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing."[7] Ploughing in the cold rains and pitiless winds requires more decision of character than belongs to a sluggard; he therefore retreats into his hut, kindles a little fire, and dozes away his time by the side of it. Nor will he be roused: "Yet a little more sleep, a little folding of the hands."[8] "As the door turneth upon his hinges," so the sluggard on his bed rolls back and forth with many a creak and weary groan.[9] He will put forth more arguments for his base conduct "than seven men that can render a reason."[10] "There is a lion in the streets;" it is too cold or too hot, too wet or too dry, too early or too late. "The slothful hideth his hand in his bosom; it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth."[11]

[1] Prov. xii. 27.
[2] Prov. xiii. 4.
[3] Prov. xviii. 9.
[4] Prov. xxi. 25, 26.
[5] Prov. xv. 19.
[6] Prov. xxii. 13.
[7] Prov. xx. 4.
[8] Prov. vi. 10.
[9] Prov. xxvi. 14.
[10] Prov. xxvi. 16.
[11] Prov. xxvi. 15.

Arab anecdotes go far beyond Solomon. A favorite illustration of extreme laziness is the case of a man that would not turn his head over on his pillow, though the muddy water leaking through the roof fell into his eye, and eventually put it out. But that description in Proverbs is the one which strikes me as most appropriate to these poor fellâhîn: "I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down."[1] That is true in all its details. The stone terraces and garden walls soon tumble down when neglected, and this country is prolific in thorns and thistles. Vineyards are soon covered with them, and valuable olive-trees are completely choked up with briers and thorns, and their owners are too shiftless and indolent to clear them away.

As you are a large manufacturer of olive-oil, I remarked to my friend of el Mŭghâr, I would like to inspect a process so truly Biblical, and which, I suppose, is performed by your people very much as it was in ancient times.

We are nearly through pressing the olives for this year, but there is one mutrûf still in operation down by the brook, to which we can walk after breakfast.

What is the difference between a mutrûf and a m'aserah?

The m'aserah is worked by hand, and is only used for the olives which fall first in autumn, before the rains of winter raise the brooks which drive the mutrûf. The olives for the m'aserah are ground to a pulp in circular large stone basins by rolling a heavy stone wheel over them. The mass is then put into small baskets of wicker-work, which are placed one upon another, between two upright posts, and pressed by a screw from above, like the screw in the standing-press of a bookbindery, or else by a beam-lever. After this first pressing, the pulp is taken out of the baskets, put into large copper pans, and, being sprinkled with water, is heated over a fire, and again pressed as before. This finishes the process, and the oil expressed is put away in jars to use, or in cisterns, to be kept for sale.

The mutrûf is driven like an ordinary mill, except that the apparatus for crushing the olives is an upright shaft, with iron cross-bars at the lower end. This shaft revolves in a stone tube, or cylinder, into which the olives are thrown from above, and mashed to a pulp by the revolving cross-bars. The interior of the cylinder is kept quite warm, so that the mass is drawn off below sufficiently heated to cause the oil to run freely. The same baskets are used as in the m'aserah, but the press is a beam-lever, with heavy weights at the end. This process is repeated a second time, as in the m'aserah, and then the refuse is thrown away.

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[1] Prov. xxiv. 30, 31.

These mutrûfs are about as filthy as any place I ever explored, and the machinery is primitive and clumsy in the extreme. Certainly a little science applied to the matter would greatly improve this important branch of Syrian manufacture. The m'aserah, however, has been used from the most remote times, as we know from the stone basins and wheels to crush the olives still found amongst the ruins of old towns. The huge stones upon the tops of upright posts prove that the ancients knew nothing of the screw, but employed beam-presses, as in your mutrûfs.

Have you any process for clarifying the oil?

None whatever, except to let it gradually settle on the lees in the cisterns or large jars in which it is kept. Common salt is sometimes thrown into a khabieh, or large jar of oil, which has the effect of precipitating the sediment more rapidly, and also of changing the color of the oil.

Certain villages are celebrated all over the country for producing oil particularly clear and sweet, and it commands a high price for table use.

Berjah, for example, above Neby Yûnas, Deir Mîmâs in Merj 'Ayûn, and et Tîreh in Carmel; but the process there is very different. The olives are first mashed as in the mutrûf, and then stirred rapidly in a large kettle of hot water. The oil is thus separated, and rises to the top, when it is skimmed off without pressing. The refuse is then thrown into vats of cold water, and an inferior oil is gathered from the surface, which is only fit for making soap.

How do you preserve the oil after it comes from the press?

There are two general methods adopted in this country. The merchant who enters into the oil-trade prepares a vaulted room, with a perfectly tight floor inclining towards the centre, where there is a vat, or shallow well, into which oil spilled in any part of the room will find its way, and not be lost. The oil is kept in large jars, called khawâbie, arranged round the sides of the vault; and should one of them burst or upset, no great loss is incurred, since the oil is recovered in the centre vat. Where the quantity expressed or purchased is very great, oil-cisterns are made, the stucco being worked into a cement as impervious and impenetrable as glass. The soap manufacturers generally adopt this plan, and so do the most extensive growers of the olive, as it is both cheaper and far safer.

It is probable that King David appointed Joash overseer of the first kind of "cellars of oil," though his office would include both; for it seems that even the cisterns are generally sunk beneath the floor of a vaulted room or cellar.[1] Micah speaks of treading out olives with the feet.[2] Is this ever done now?

Not that I know of. It could only be done when the olives have been kept until they are very soft, as mine are at present.

Does it not injure the quality of the oil to keep the olives so long?

Not materially, if proper care be taken to prevent heating and fermentation. Our olives are now quite black, and a person unacquainted with the matter might think them altogether spoiled; and yet, as you will see, the oil is clear and sweet, and the yield is equally good.

I have heard it said that the blight, which nearly destroyed the grapes all over this country, and greatly injured the vineyards through the south of Europe, attacked the olives also. Have you noticed anything of the kind in your orchards?

There have been, perhaps, more withered olives than usual, but I do not think it was from the blight. The olive dries up without developing, and falls off; but there is none of that whitish mould, nor that smell which the grape-blight occasions. The vineyards in this region are ruined; and the people have cut them down, and sowed the land with grain. That calamity acts very mysteriously. The vines blossom, and the young grapes set as usual;

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[1] 1 Chron. xxvii. 28.

[2] Mic. vi. 15.

but soon after a gray mould spreads over them, and as they grow, they corrupt, with a very peculiar odor. There is this also strange about it: one year it attacks the vines raised on poles or running on trees, and those lying on the ground escape; the next year it is the reverse. Some vineyards, exposed to the winds, are wholly destroyed; others, sheltered from them, are uninjured: and, again, this is reversed. Hitherto no explanation has appeared which accounts either for the calamity itself or for its eccentricities.

Moses and the prophets assign such visitations, without hesitation, to the displeasure of God. Moses says expressly that God would thus punish the inhabitants for their sins: "Thou shalt plant vineyards, and dress them, but shalt neither drink of the wine, nor gather the grapes; for the worms shall eat them. Thou shalt have olive trees throughout all thy coasts, but thou shalt not anoint thyself with the oil; for thine olive shall cast his fruit."[1] And the sacred writers often speak of blasting and mildew as chastisements sent directly from God. It seems natural to refer like judgments in this same land, upon a people whose moral and religious character so closely resemble those to whom the threatenings were first addressed, to the same source.

The people themselves do in fact thus account for them: "for the greatness of our sins," is the universal proverb. Can it be mere imagination that there is something peculiar in the providential dispensations experienced in this land?

Certainly, in olden times there was much that was special. God so made this land of Canaan that it should furnish appropriate types and emblems, through which spiritual mysteries and invisible realities might be developed, and so pictured to the eye and the imagination as to affect the heart of man. Lebanon and Hermon and these mountains point to heaven, the sunken Sea of Death to still lower depths. The valleys, the plains, the brooks and fountains, "from the swellings of Jordan" to "the waters of Siloah, that go softly" from under the altar of God—all were so made and disposed, as to shadow forth dimly, yet not the less impressively, divine revelations needful for universal man.

No other groupings of natural objects are so significant: no other names can be substituted, in our spiritual vocabulary, for them; and what they formerly taught, they teach now, and ever will, to the end of time. It is this which invests even the physical features of Palestine with an interest and an importance which can belong to no other land. Jordan is much more than a mere river of water, Zion infinitely dearer than any ordinary mass of rock; in a word, the Divine Architect constructed this country after a model, infolding in itself, and unfolding to the world, the mysteries of the life that is, and of that which is to be.

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[1] Deut. xxviii. 39, 40.

These physical features are still preserved unchanged, to teach the same great truths to every successive generation. So God's daily providences towards this country and its inhabitants reiterate the same lessons that were addressed to the twelve tribes, and repeat their significance as then expounded by the divine teachers. Blight and mildew come now, as they did of old, we know not how; God sends them. Thus come famine and dearth, when the Lord summons his great army of locusts, caterpillars, and palmer-worms, to devour, and sends the blasting sirocco, with its rain of powder and dust. Thus, too, even in our day, "He rises to shake terribly the earth," and overwhelm the cities of the guilty.

There is much more than a mere fortuitous conjunction of accidents in these and other natural phenomena which might be mentioned. I can scarcely lift my eye without lighting upon something which repeats those lessons which God himself here taught to generations long since dead and gone. These poor women, "who cut up mallows by the bushes" to mingle with their broth, are only doing that which "want and famine," divinely sent, compelled the solitary to do in the days of Job.[1] Thus the action of those women corroborates our translation of the word malluach, mallows.

Most modern critics understand by malluach the Artiplex halimus, a shrub several feet high, with sour leaves, without thorns, and small purple flowers, found along the sea-shore of this country. But that locality does not accord with the reference in Job, for those whom he saw cutting up the mallows were in the eastern wilderness, far enough from the sea-coast. And though the radical meaning of malluach suggests some saline plant, confirmed also by the Arabic Bible, yet this does not necessarily exclude the malva family; and, until further light on the matter, I am contented with our version, and delight to see the practical illustration of the act before us, as I have elsewhere seen it in Syria.

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[1] Job xxx. 3, 4.

Those men who have cleared away the earth, and are laying the axe at the very roots of that tree, in order to hew it down for fire-wood, are repeating the formula by which the Baptist teaches that in the kingdom of heaven "every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire."[1] The fellâhîn value trees only as they bear good fruit: all others are cut down as cumberers of the ground; and they cut them from the very root, as John had seen done in his day. And this man, with his load of dry weeds and grass, is going to remind us, at his tannûr, of the day "that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble."[2] And we may further recall the words of Christ, when he said, "If God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"[3] This lad who is setting fire to these briers and thorns suggests the act which typified the awful condition of those apostates whom it was "impossible to renew again unto repentance; whose end is to be burned."[4]

He finds it difficult to set the thorns on fire, for it is too late in the season. Before the rains came this whole mountain-side was in a blaze. Thorns and briers grow so luxuriantly here, that they must be burnt off always before the plough can operate. The peasants watch for a high wind, and then the fire catches easily, and spreads with great rapidity.

This practice of burning over the grounds is very ancient in other lands besides this; and as there are here neither fences nor habitations in the open country to be injured by the fire, there is no danger in it. Every school-boy will remember what Virgil says about it:

> Long practice has a sure improvement found,
> With kindled fires to burn the barren ground.
> When the light stubble, to the flames resigned,
> Is driven along, and crackles in the wind.[5]
> . . . .

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[1] Matt. iii. 10. [2] Mal. iv. 1. [3] Matt. vi. 30. [4] Heb. vi. 4, 8. [5] 1 Georgic.

One would suppose that the poet was but an inexperienced farmer to puzzle himself with half a dozen speculations about the possible way in which this burning is beneficial, as whether the "earth is warmed by it," or some "latent vice is cured," or redundant humors "driven off," or that "new breathings" are opened in the chapped earth; or the very reverse—

> That the heat the gaping ground constrains,
> New knits the surface, and new strings the veins;
> Lest soaking showers should pierce her secret seat,
> Or freezing Boreas chill her genial heat,
> Or scorching suns too violently beat.

The Arab fellâh would laugh at the whole of them, and tell you that two very good reasons, not mentioned by the poet, were all-sufficient. That it destroyed and removed out of the way of the plough weeds, grass, stubble, and thorn-bushes, and that the ashes of this consumed rubbish was a valuable manure to the land.

David has a terrible imprecation against the enemies of God in the eighty-third Psalm, fourteenth and fifteenth verses: "As the fire burneth a wood, and as the flame setteth the mountains on fire; so persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid with thy storm." The woods of this country are almost exclusively on the mountains, and hence the allusion to them. I have known several such catastrophes since I came to Syria, and am always reminded by them of this passage.

In Nahum i. 10, the prophet has a striking allusion to thorns. Speaking of the wicked, he says: "For while they be folden together as thorns, and while they are drunken as drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble fully dry." The reference, probably, was to that kind of thorns called bellân, which cover the whole country; are so folden together as to be quite inseparable, and, being united by small intertwining branches, when the torch is applied flash and flame instantly, "as stubble fully dry;" indeed, the peasants select the bellân, folden together, when they want to kindle a fire.

There is another allusion to fire amongst thorns which you, in this neighborhood, must have had occasion to notice. Moses says, "If fire break out, and catch in thorns, so that the stacks of corn, or the standing corn, or the field, be consumed therewith; he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution."[1]

Yes, we are obliged to charge our nawatîr, or watchmen, as harvest-time advances, to guard with the utmost care against kindling a fire near the wheat-fields.

The reason why Moses mentions its catching amongst thorns only, I suppose, is because thorns grow all round the fields, and actually intermingle with the wheat. By harvest-time they are not only dry themselves, but are choked up with grass dry as powder. Fire, therefore, catches in them easily, and spreads with great rapidity; and as the grain is dead ripe, it is impossible to save it or to extinguish the fire.

When I was crossing the plain of Gennesaret during harvest, I stopped to lunch at 'Ain et Tîny, and my servant kindled a very small fire to make a cup of coffee. A man, detached from a company of reapers, came immediately, and stood patiently by us until we had finished, without saying what he wanted. As soon as we left, however, he carefully extinguished our little fire; and, upon inquiry, I found he had been sent for that purpose. Burckhardt, while stopping at Tiberias, hired a guide to the caves in Wady el Hamâm, and says that this man was constantly reproving him for the careless manner in which he threw away the ashes from his pipe. He then adds, "The Arabs who inhabit the valley of the Jordan invariably put to death any person who is known to have been even the innocent cause of firing the grass; and they have made a law amongst themselves that, even in the height of intestine warfare, no one shall set his enemy's harvest on fire."

The ordinance of Moses on this subject was a wise regulation, designed to meet a very urgent necessity. To understand the full value of the law, we must remember that then, as now, the wheat was suffered to become dead ripe, and dry as tinder, before it was cut; and, further, that the land was tilled in common, and the grain sown in vast fields, without fence or hedge to separate the individual portions. A fire catching in any part, and driven by the wind, would consume the whole; and thus the entire population might be stripped of their year's provisions.

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[1] Exod. xxii. 6.

The account of your ride through Upper Galilee to Meirôn, and the description of the visit you made to your friend at el Mŭghâr, have so occupied our attention since leaving Tell Birweh, that we paid little heed to the country through which we were passing.

Where we turned out of the valley to ascend the mountain, there are a few old square stones near a well, which may mark the site of some ancient place now nameless; and traces of a Roman road are seen leading up the side of the hill to this village of Kabûl. It is a miserable place, but probably the modern representative of a town on the border of Asher; and it has been identified with the Chabolo of Josephus.[1]

It is, indeed, an insignificant hamlet. The houses are few, scattered along the bare, rocky ridge, and half hidden by bushes and weeds.

If this was one of the "twenty cities in the land of Galilee that King Solomon gave to Hiram," his friend, in return for his aid in furnishing material for the erection of the Temple, I do not wonder that "they pleased him not."[2] He certainly expressed his dissatisfaction by the name which he fastened upon them, and which appears to be perpetuated in that of this village.

Hiram afterwards restored the twenty cities to Solomon, who rebuilt them, "and caused the children of Israel to dwell there."[3] Kabûl itself could not have been then a place of importance; for it has no fountain, and the inhabitants must always have depended upon cisterns, as they do at present. The soil, however, below the village is capable of high cultivation; and even now the fig, the olive, the kharnûb, and many other trees thrive well on the cretaceous terraces which descend westward towards the plain.

High up the eastern mountain is a small village, called Mĭ'âr, overlooking the plain of Acre, which may also mark the site of one of those cities given to Hiram by his royal friend. We learn from the life of Josephus, written by himself, that he marched to Chabolo, the modern Kabûl, before the Roman army, coming from Acre, attacked him at Jotapata. That place was located on a ridge between Mĭ'âr and the plain of el Bŭttauf. I visited the site, now called Jefât, from Khŭrbet Kâna, on the western margin of el Bŭttauf. But after reading the elaborate description of Jotapata given by Josephus, and the account of his heroic defence of it against the army of Vespasian, by whom he was at last taken prisoner, one is sadly disappointed in the place.[1] Scarcely a trace of the city can be found, and nothing is to be seen of the fortifications.

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[1] Josh. xix. 27.

[2] 1 Kings ix. 10–14.

[3] 2 Chron. viii. 1, 2.

It took half an hour to ride from Khŭrbet Kâna to the foot of the rock of Jefât. The path to it is in the bed of Wady Jefât, and is easy enough for a single horseman, but would be quite impracticable for an army; and that agrees well with the description of Josephus. The hill-sides and lateral ravines, of which there are many, are covered with a thick jungle of oak coppice—the very best haunt for the wild boar, and wild Arabs too. We however saw nothing more formidable than a jackal. The wadys about it, however, are neither deeper nor more precipitous than other valleys in Galilee; and the fortress of Gamala, east of the lake of Tiberias, was far more difficult to attack.

The absence of fortifications on the top of Jefât can be satisfactorily explained. The original works were, doubtless, extemporized for the emergency, built of the soft cretaceous rock of the place; and, being demolished and deserted, they would crumble into just such rubbish as now covers the extreme edges of the rock. There are a few caves and old cisterns about it, sufficient for the story, divested of exaggeration, as this ought to be above all others in Josephus. He intended to rest his fame as a warrior upon the defence of Jotapata, and that stimulated his pen.

Resuming our ride from Kabûl, the road leads southward over the shoulder of the mountain above the village. I once witnessed a curious and striking incident when passing along this route. The whole region then swarmed with locusts, and great efforts were being made to destroy them. The governor of this district had summoned the entire population—men, women, and children—to engage in the work of extirpation. Soon after leaving Kabûl, a servant of the governor came to meet us, and requested that we would descend to a path lower down on the side of the mountain, so as not to interfere with the proceedings.

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[1] Jos. B. J. iii. vii. 3–36; iii. viii. 1.

The people, forming a wide circle, were beating the bushes, and shouting at the top of their stentorian voices, in order to drive the locusts on to an isolated hill covered with dry grass and bellân thorn bushes. The locusts had not yet got their wings, and could, therefore, be driven before that noisy cordon. The whole hill-side soon became black with countless numbers of locusts, and then the grass was set on fire in many different places. A strong breeze blew from the west, and the entire hill was speedily ablaze. With this fierce conflagration spreading far and wide, the atmosphere soon became pervaded with an overpowering odor of roast locust, and we hastened to escape from that locality. I saw the same operation, though on a smaller scale, in several other places during that day's ride.

Locusts must be a dreadful scourge to this country. Do they make their appearance every year?

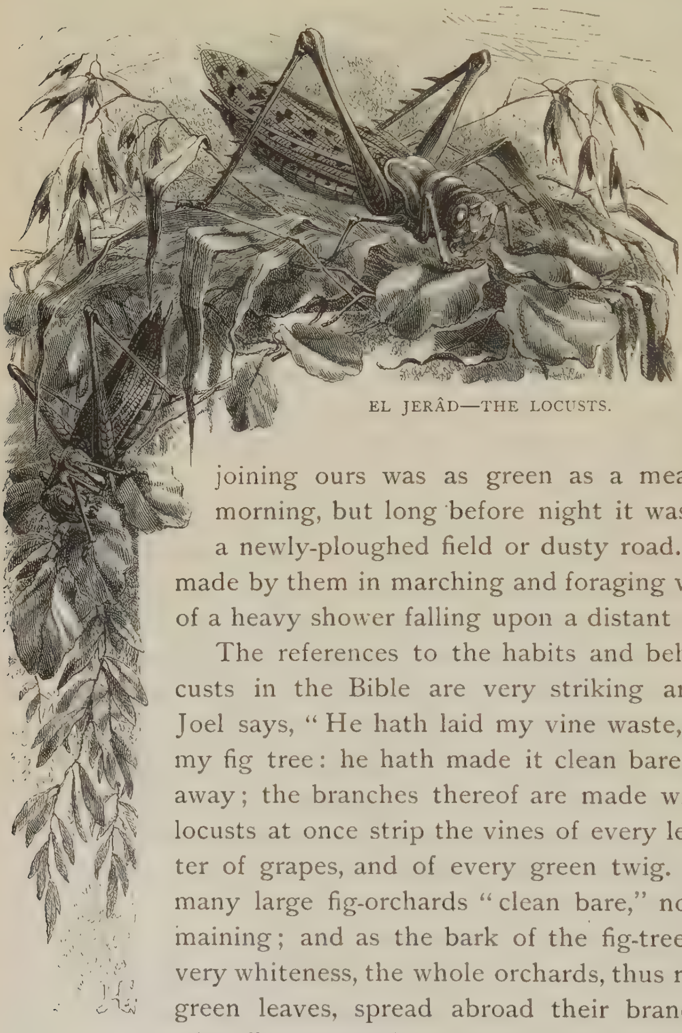
In some parts of the land, as in the eastern desert, they may be said to reappear every year, and they are indeed a terrible calamity. The first time I saw them in this country was on the hill above Fûlîyeh. Noticing something peculiar on the hill-side, I rode up to examine it, when, to my amazement, the whole surface became agitated, and began to roll down the declivity. My horse was so frightened that I was obliged to dismount. The locusts were very young, not yet able even to jump; they had the shape, however, of minute grasshoppers. Their numbers seemed infinite, and in their haste to get out of my way they literally rolled over and over, like fluid mortar. Several years after that I became better acquainted with these insects in 'Abeîh, on Mount Lebanon.

Early in the spring the locusts appeared in considerable numbers along the sea-coast and on the lower spurs of the mountains. They did no great injury at the time, and, having laid their eggs, immediately disappeared. The people, familiar with their habits, looked with anxiety to the time when those eggs would be hatched, nor were their fears groundless or exaggerated. For several days previous to the first of June we had heard that thousands of young locusts were on their march up the valley towards our village, and at length I was told that they had reached the lower part of it.

Summoning all the people I could collect, we went to meet and attack them, hoping to stop their progress altogether, or at least to turn aside the line of their march. Never shall I lose the impression produced by the first view of them. I had often passed through clouds of flying locusts; but these we now confronted were without wings, and about the size of full-grown grasshoppers, which they closely resembled in appearance and behavior. But their number was astounding; the whole face of the mountain was black with them. On they came like a disciplined army. We dug trenches and kindled fires, and beat and burnt to death "heaps upon heaps," but the effort was utterly useless. They charged up the mountain-side, and climbed over rocks, walls, ditches, and hedges, those behind covering up and passing over the masses already killed. After a long and fatiguing contest, I descended the mountain to examine the length of the column, but I could not see to the end of it. Wearied by my hard-fought battle with that devastating host, I returned, and gave over the vain effort to stop its progress for that day.

By the next morning the head of the column had reached my garden, and, hiring eight or ten people, I resolved to rescue at least my flowers and vegetables. During the day we succeeded, by fire, and by beating the locusts off the walls with bushes and branches, in keeping our little garden tolerably clear of them; but it was appalling to watch that irresistible army as it marched up the road and ascended the hill above my house. At length, worn out with incessant skirmishing, I gave up the contest. Carrying the pots into the house, and covering up what else I could, I surrendered the remainder to the conquerors. For four days they continued to pass on towards the east, until finally only a few stragglers of the mighty hosts were left behind.

In every stage of their existence the locusts give a most impressive view of the power of God to punish a wicked world. Observe the pioneers of the host, those flying squadrons that appear in early spring. No power of man can interrupt them; thousands on thousands, with most fatal industry, deposit their innumerable eggs in the field, the plain, and the desert. This done, they vanish like morning mist. But in six or eight weeks the very dust seems to waken into life, and begins to creep. Soon this animated earth becomes minute grasshoppers, and, creeping and jumping, all in the same general direction, they begin their destructive progress. Whilst on the march they consumed every green thing with wonderful eagerness and expedition. A large vineyard and vegetable garden adjoining ours was as green as a meadow in the morning, but long before night it was as bare as a newly-ploughed field or dusty road. The noise made by them in marching and foraging was like that of a heavy shower falling upon a distant forest.



EL JERÂD—THE LOCUSTS.

The references to the habits and behavior of locusts in the Bible are very striking and accurate. Joel says, "He hath laid my vine waste, and barked my fig tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white."[1] The locusts at once strip the vines of every leaf and cluster of grapes, and of every green twig. I also saw many large fig-orchards "clean bare," not a leaf remaining; and as the bark of the fig-tree is of a silvery whiteness, the whole orchards, thus rifled of their green leaves, spread abroad their branches "made white" in melancholy nakedness to the burning sun. In view of the utter destruction which they effect, the prophet exclaims, "Alas for the day! for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come. Is not the meat cut off before our eyes?"[1] This is most emphatically true. Not only large vineyards loaded with young grapes, but whole fields of corn disappear, and olive, fig, and mulberry trees are stripped of their leaves as if by magic, and the hope of the husbandman vanishes like smoke.

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[1] Joel i. 7.

Again, "How do the beasts groan! the herds of cattle are perplexed, because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are made desolate."[2] This is poetic, but true. A field over which this army of desolation has passed shows not a blade for even a goat to nip. "The land is as the garden of Eden before them, and behind them a desolate wilderness; yea, and nothing shall escape them. Before their face the people shall be much pained: all faces shall gather blackness. They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war; and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks."[3] When the head of the mighty column of locusts came in contact with the palace of the emîr in 'Abeîh, they did not take the trouble to wheel round the corners, but climbed the wall like men of war, and marched over the top of it; and this they did when they reached the houses, in spite of all efforts to prevent it. "They shall run to and fro; they shall run upon the wall, they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief."[4] Every part of the description is true to the life.

The prophet Nahum says that the locusts "camp in the hedges in the cold day, but when the sun ariseth they flee away, and their place is not known where they are."[5] To any one who has attentively watched the habits of the locust, that allusion is very striking. In the evenings, as soon as the air becomes cool, they literally camp in the hedges and loose stone walls, covering them over like a swarm of bees settled on a bush. There they remain until the next day's sun waxes warm, when they again commence their march. If the day is cool, the locusts scarcely move at all from their camps, and multitudes remain actually stationary until the next morning. Those that march creep along very heavily, as if cramped and stiff; but in a hot day they hurry forward in a very brisk, earnest, and lively manner.

[1] Joel i. 15, 16. [2] Joel i. 18. [3] Joel ii. 3, 6, 7. [4] Joel ii. 9. [5] Nahum iii. 17.

It is an aggravation of the calamity if the weather continues cool, for then they prolong their stay, and do far more damage. When the hot sun beats powerfully upon them, they literally "flee away, and their place is not known where they are." This is true even in regard to those which have not wings. One wonders where they have all gone to. Yesterday the whole earth seemed to be creeping and jumping, to-day you see not a locust. And the disappearance of the clouds of flying locusts is still more sudden and complete.

David complains that he was "tossed up and down as the locust."[1] This reference is to the flying locust. I have had frequent opportunities to notice how their squadrons are "tossed up and down," and whirled round and round by the ever-varying currents of the winds.

Solomon says, "The locusts have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands."[2] Nothing in their habits is more striking than the pertinacity with which they all pursue the same line of march, like a disciplined army. As they have no king, they must be influenced by some common instinct.

I am not surprised that Pharaoh's servants remonstrated against his folly and madness when they heard the plague of locusts announced. "Let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?" And when the locusts came, they were very grievous; for "they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees: and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field." Moses declared that they should "cover the face of the earth, that one cannot be able to see the earth."[3] For several nights after the locusts came to 'Abeîh, as soon as I closed my eyes the whole earth seemed to be creeping and jumping, nor could I banish the ugly image from my brain.

The coming of locusts is a sore judgment from God. "If I command the locusts to devour the land," says the Lord to Solomon.[4] Yes, it is the command of God that brings these insects to scourge a land for the wickedness of the inhabitants thereof.

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[1] Psa. cix. 23. [2] Prov. xxx. 27. [3] Exod. x. 3–15. [4] 2 Chron. vii. 13.

Do you suppose that the meat of John the Baptist was literally locusts and wild honey?[1]

Why not? by the Arabs of the desert they are eaten to this day. Burckhardt thus speaks on this subject: "All the Bedawîn of Arabia, and the inhabitants of towns in Nejd and Hedjaz, are accustomed to eat locusts. I have seen at Medina and Tayf locust shops, where these animals were sold by measure. In Egypt and Nubia they are only eaten by the poorest beggars. The Arabs, in preparing locusts as an article of food, throw them alive into boiling water with which a good deal of salt has been mixed. After a few minutes they are taken out and dried in the sun; the head, feet, and wings are then torn off; the bodies are cleansed from the salt and perfectly dried, after which process whole sacks are filled with them by the Bedawîn. They are sometimes eaten boiled in butter, and they often contribute materials for a breakfast when spread over unleavened bread mixed with butter."

Locusts are not eaten in Syria by any but the Bedawîn on the extreme frontiers. By the natives locusts are always spoken of as a very inferior article of food, and regarded by most with disgust—to be eaten only by the very poorest people. John the Baptist, however, was of that class, either from necessity or election. He also dwelt in "the wilderness" or desert, where such food was and is still used, and therefore the text states the simple truth. His ordinary "meat" probably was dried locusts, boiled or fried in butter, and mixed with honey, as is still frequently done. This honey, too, was the article made by bees, and not dibs, a sirup of grapes, or dates, the fruit of the palm, nor anything else which commentators have suggested. Wild honey is still gathered from rocks in the wadys, and from trees in the wilderness, where the Baptist sojourned before he came to "preach the baptism of repentance."

Nor did John transgress the law of Moses by thus eating locusts. Disgusting as this food appears to us, the Hebrews in the wilderness—probably in Egypt also—were accustomed to use it, and in Leviticus xi. 22, it is declared to be clean in all its varieties, one of which is wrongly called beetle in our translation. There can be no reasonable doubt that chargol, rendered beetle, designates a species of grasshopper or locust.

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[1] Matt. iii. 4.

What is the name of that village and ruined castle on the hillside south of the wady into which we have just descended?

'Abilîn; and though not identified with any Biblical place, it is evidently built on an ancient site. A part of the dilapidated castle was occupied by the feudal family of 'Akîl Aga when I visited the place. It is said that the banners of Richard of England waved over the towers of that castle during the siege of Acre by the Crusaders.

We are now on the regular road from Acre to Nazareth, which you will remember as passing by Tell Kîsôn and et Tîreh to 'Abilîn. Wady 'Abilîn is supposed by Dr. Robinson to be the valley of Jiphthah-el, on the confines of the tribes of Zebulun and Asher.[1] We shall now follow up that wady for more than an hour to the southern margin of the Bŭttauf, west of Seffûrieh.

It is conducting us through a grand avenue of magnificent oaks, whose grateful shade is refreshing to the weary traveller.

They are part of an extensive forest which covers most of the hills southward to the plain of Esdraelon. There is hardly a more agreeable ride in the country than that through this noble oak woods from Shefa 'Omar to Seffûrieh. Many of the trees are very large, and by their great age indicate that this region was not cultivated; nor are there any ancient sites or modern villages along the road.

The large village of Shefa 'Omar is situated on the ridge to the south of 'Abilîn, and less than three miles distant from it. The chief town of that district, it has a few shops, and contains about two thousand inhabitants—Druses, Moslems, Christians, and Jews. There is a Greek church, a Latin convent, and a Jewish synagogue in the place; but the object of special interest is the castle, now in ruins. It is a square, massive building two stories high, with lofty gates and archways, vaulted corridors and chambers surrounding an open court, large enough to accommodate a squadron of cavalry.

The view from the castle, over the plain of Acre and the sea, with Haifa and Carmel in the background, and Lebanon far away

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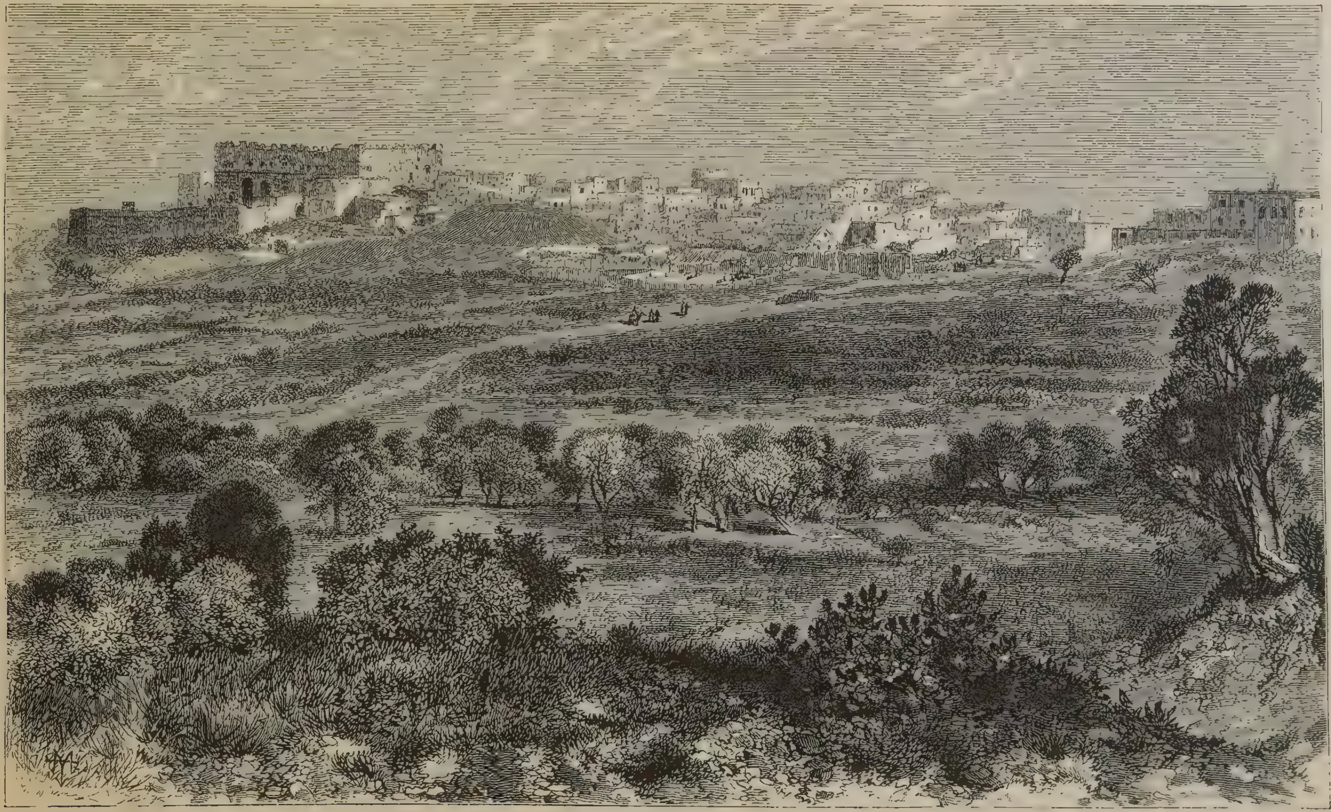
[1] Josh. xix. 14, 27.



SHEFA 'OMAR.

to the north, is alone well worth a visit to the place. The castle is said to have been built by Dhâher el 'Omar, but he probably only repaired it. According to an Arab writer, Saladin pitched his camp at Shefa 'Omar when the Crusaders besieged Acre.

Is this fine plain that begins to appear on our left the Bŭttauf you have mentioned more than once? It spreads far away to the north-east, one vast field of waving wheat and barley.

The soil is surpassingly rich; but during the heavy rains of winter the northern part is covered with water, and it is then a marsh, not easily or safely traversed. On the north-western margin of the plain is Khŭrbet Kâna, called also Kâna el Jelîl, and to visit it I crossed the Bŭttauf from a village on the eastern side of the plain, called Rŭmmâneh, believed to be the Rimmon of the tribe of Zebulun.[1] The day we crossed the Bŭttauf the eastern half of it was a lake, and the path from Rŭmmâneh to Kâna led through the oozy, spongy end of it—a most nervous ride. For two miles the horses waded through mud and water to the knees, along an invisible path less than two feet wide, which had been tramped down to a consistency sufficient to arrest the sinking foot for a moment; but if the careless or jaded animal stepped to one side or the other, it sank into a quivering quagmire. After several adventures of that kind, we "came to land" at the base of the rocky tell upon which Kâna was built.

Leaving our tired animals to rest and crop the grass, we walked up and down the hill. It faces the south-east, and rises boldly from the margin of the Bŭttauf, commanding an extensive view over the plain and the hills about Nazareth. The hill itself is nearly isolated. Wady Jefât comes down to it, and then along its south-western base, and another deep ravine cuts it off from the general range on the north and north-east, and it stands out like a large tell.

A careful examination of the site led to the conclusion that there were never more than fifty houses in the place. All are now deserted. They were built of limestone, cut and laid up after the fashion still common in this region, and some of them may have been inhabited within the last century. There are some ancient

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[1] Josh. xix. 13; 1 Chron. vi. 77.

KHŬRBET KÂNA—CANA OF GALILEE.

cisterns about Kâna, and fragments of water-jars, but no fountain and no wells.

The claim of Kefr Kenna, north-east of Nazareth, to be the true site of Cana of Galilee has been set aside by Dr. Robinson and others in favor of Khŭrbet Kâna, the ruin of Kâna, and I see no special reason to question the identification. To that place Nathanael, one of the earliest disciples, belonged, whom Philip brought to see Jesus, and who said of him, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!"[1] There Christ turned the water into wine at the marriage feast, and "this beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory."[2]

Some of my companions gathered bits of water-jars as mementos of that miracle—witnesses they could hardly be, for those of the narrative were of stone, while these were of baked earth.

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[1] John i. 43–51; xxi. 2.

[2] John ii. 1–11.

There is now not a habitable house in the humble village where our blessed Lord sanctioned, by his presence and miraculous assistance, the world-wide institution of marriage. This fact might suggest a whole chapter of instructive reflections. It is a divine law of development to hide away the beginnings of things the most momentous in some almost undiscoverable point. This is an example. Innumerable millions in their happiest hours have had their thoughts and hearts directed to Cana. The proudest cities on earth might envy her lot. Nineveh and Babylon, and thousands of others may be forgotten, but not Cana of Galilee. To the end of time, whenever and wherever there shall be a bride and the bridegroom, then and there will Cana of Galilee be remembered. Some names we pronounce with honor, some with shame and sorrow, many with cold indifference; but Cana will ever mingle in the song of the happy, to symbolize the bliss of wedded love — the peace and purity of domestic life.

There, also, Christ healed the son of "a certain nobleman," who "was sick at Capernaum;" "this is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judea into Galilee."[1] Everything about Kâna el Jelîl confirms the great fact that the son of God lived amongst, and loved and labored for the poor. No rich man ever resided in Cana, and Nazareth itself was then not much larger, and perhaps even more insignificant.

Khŭrbet Ḳâna is not only deserted, but so wild is the immediate neighborhood that it is the favorite hunting-ground of the Kefr Kennits. Ibrahim, our guide, had shot a large leopard amongst its ruined houses only a week previous to our visit. He had been hunting wild-boar in Wady Jefât.

Coming up from Acre in the hot month of June, along the well-wooded Wady 'Abilîn, which we have just passed through, we spent the night at Seffûrieh, which we are about to visit. This was on the occasion of another trip to Khŭrbet Kâna and the region around el Bŭttauf. The next morning we crossed the plain from the same village, and rode over the same path as before. But this time, instead of a flooded marsh, we had great difficulty in getting any water to drink; and the plain was crowded with many reapers in long lines, working with might and main, singing all the while in a low, responsive monotone not unpleasant to the ear. The people of Sŭkhnîn, on the mountain to the north of Kâna, claim that part of the Bŭttauf, and the reapers all belonged to that village.

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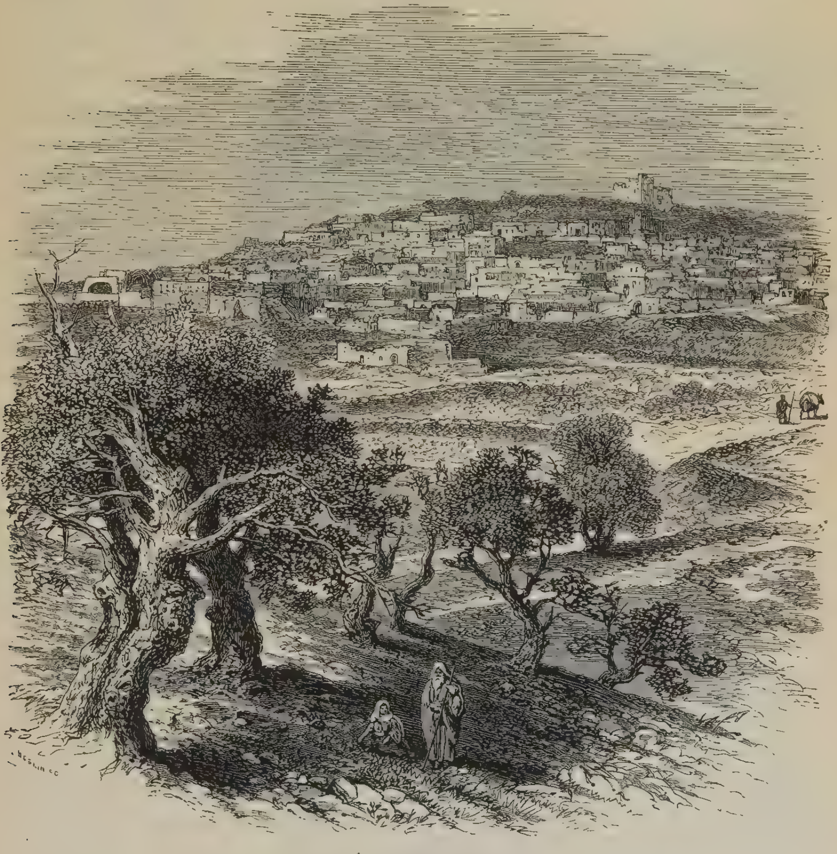
[1] John iv. 43–54.

At Khŭrbet Kâna some water was discovered at the bottom of a cistern, and a fellâh girl was lowered into it by a rope. She dipped up for us half a jar of stagnant rain-water, not at all suggestive of the "good wine" of the feast. But we were too thirsty to question the quality of the liquid, about which the least said the better.

We left Khŭrbet Kâna for 'Arrâbeh, which we reached in two hours. It is a considerable village, on the mountains north of the Bŭttauf, and has a well-built church and some large houses, around most of which a number of beehives were arranged; and the air resounded with the hum of those busy collectors of honey. I found similar stacks of beehives in other villages of that district—Sŭkhnîn, Kabûl, Dier Hanna, Kŭbarah, Semmûnia, and elsewhere. At 'Arrâbeh there is the largest pool I ever saw in Galilee; and around it were collected about a thousand animals—horses, donkeys, cows, sheep, and goats—evidence enough that even in June water is very scarce on those green hills of Naphtali.

The ride from 'Arrâbeh northward for two hours was mostly through a wild, wooded region, highly picturesque, but without water, until we came down to the beautiful brook that flows through Wady Semmûnia. The whole region is a paradise for birds at that season. Bulbuls abound, and of the cooing of doves there is no end, and the cackling of red-legged partridges rings continuously through the park-like groves. In whatever direction the traveller wanders over Upper Galilee, he stumbles upon the sites of ancient towns, and thus far confirms the statement of Josephus in regard to the great number of its cities in his day.

At Semmûnia I saw numbers of small sheaves of the fresh-cut wheat, neatly cleaned, and tied up with a band, and arranged upon the roof of a sacred muzâr—votive offerings of "first fruits"—a remnant, perhaps, of a Biblical custom preserved amongst those secluded peasants. This tour was made in the beginning of wheat harvest; and wherever we came upon reapers, one or more would run to meet us with a little sheaf, calling out, "This is your offering;" a custom common elsewhere, and quite pretty in itself, and pleasing too, if it did not lead to persevering demands for bakhshîsh.



SEFFÛRIEH—SEPPHORIS.

Seffûrieh, with its square castle and Gothic church, is now before us, conspicuously situated upon the south-western slope of a long ridge of no great elevation. The view, however, from the top of the old castle is beautiful, varied, and extensive: northward, over the plain of el Bŭttauf and the wooded hills of Zebulun; eastward, up the long plain of Tur'ân and Kefr Kenna, towards the Lake of Tiberias; while to the west spread those grand oak groves to Shefa 'Omar, and Mount Carmel beyond. Nazareth is about five miles to the south, concealed from sight by the group of surrounding hills; the wely of Neby Sa'id, just above the town, is distinctly visible.

CHURCH OF THE VIRGIN.

Seffûrieh is the Sepphoris—the Diocæsarea of the Romans and the fathers—which figures largely in Josephus and during the time of the Crusades. The fine fountains south of Seffûrieh, the more valuable for their rarity in this region, have witnessed many a contest between Crusader and Saracen, as it was a favorite camping-ground for both. Count Raymond, with his associate barons and soldiers, encamped there the night before the disastrous battle with Saladin around the Horns of Hattîn, July 5th, 1187, which in reality terminated the kingdom of the Franks in Palestine.

Though it was an important city for several centuries after the advent of Christ, as appears abundantly from Josephus and Roman authors, and had coins struck with its name, yet it owes its celebrity mostly to the tradition that Joachim and Anna, the supposed parents of the Virgin Mary, resided there. It was the largest and strongest city in Galilee, and is now a considerable village, and flourishing for this region. The inhabitants are not the most complacent to strangers, and I have never liked to spend the night there.

Before entering Seffûrieh, we may look at the remains of the church said to have been erected in the sixth century over the spot occupied by the house of Joachim and Anna, and where the Virgin is supposed to have received the salutation of the angel. It was built, as you observe, in the usual form, with side aisle and central nave, the arches of which remain standing. The eastern end was destroyed long ago, and it is now shut in by a modern wall. A short distance from the church lies a double column, which may have belonged to an older structure.

We will now ride through the village, and visit the castle on the top of the hill. It was about fifty feet square, built with walls several feet thick. The lower courses of stone are bevelled, some of them measuring six feet by three feet. They may be of Roman, or, perhaps, Jewish origin; for Sepphoris was chiefly occupied by Jews, both before and long after the commencement of our era. It must have been repaired by the Crusaders, or even rebuilt by them, and has undoubtedly endured many a siege by the Jew, the Roman, and the Saracen.

Nazareth is still about an hour's ride to the south. The road passes by the fountains of Seffûrieh, and through the valley west of the village of er Reineh. Near Wely Isma'îl we will get a view of the plain of Esdraelon and of the region around it.

The sun is sinking behind the fine oak woods through which we passed on our way to Seffûrieh; and, as there is nothing to detain us along the road, we will reach the end of our day's ride before darkness conceals from us the earthly home of Jesus, our blessed Lord and Saviour.

CASTLE AT SEFFÛRIEH.

IX.

FROM NAZARETH TO TIBERIAS.

Nazareth from the North.—The Home of Mary and "the Child Jesus."—Nazareth not mentioned in the Old Testament.—History of Nazareth.—Maundrell.—Napoleon Bonaparte.—Sir Sidney Smith.—Modern Nazareth.—English Church and Orphanage.—Jesus in Nazareth.—Gospels of the Infancy.—Sites and Shrines.—Nazareth in the Time of Jesus.—"He shall be called a Nazarene."—"Jesus of Nazareth."—Nazarites.—Early Mass.—Mount of Precipitation.—Girls of Nazareth.—Church of the Annunciation.—The Holy Grotto.—House and Chapel of Joseph.—"Mensa Christi."—Synagogue.—House of the Virgin and the Santa Casa at Loretto.—Deceptions and Fictions.—Outlook from Neby Isma'îl.—Fountain of the Virgin.—Greek Church of the Annunciation.—The Good that did come out of Nazareth.—Nazareth to Tabor.—Debûrieh, Daberath.—Mount Tabor.—View from Tabor.—Ruins on the Summit of Tabor.—Scripture References to Tabor.—Tabor and Hermon.—The Net spread upon Tabor.—The Transfiguration.—Oak Woods.—Khân et Tujjâr.—Fair.—Villages between Khân et Tujjâr and Jisr el Mejâmi'a.—Castle of Belvoir.—Depression of the Jordan Valley.—Adventure with a Fahd at the Camp of 'Akîl Aga.—The Hunting Panther.—A Present to the Emperor.—Lieutenant Lynch describes 'Akîl Aga.—David's Allusion to the Lion.—Jisr Um el Kanâtir.—View of Lake Tiberias.—Tarichæa.—Sea-fight between the Jews and Romans.—Storm on the Lake.—Excursion to Gadara.—Men, Women, Children, and Flocks fording the Jordan.—Jisr el Mejâmi'a.—Gorge of the Jarmuk.—Hot Springs of el Hummah.—The Jarmuk, the Heiromax.—Um Keis, Gadara.—The City of the Dead.—Gadarites.—Demoniacs and Swine.—Outgo of the Jordan.—Shooting the Rapids.—Aqueduct in Wady Fadjâs.—Ruined Sugar-mill.—Drought before Harvest.—Ammaus, Hammath.—Hot Baths of Tiberias.—"The Mules in the Wilderness."—Dawn over the Lake.—The Sea of Galilee associated with Christ.—Tiberias mentioned only by John.—The City of Tiberias not visited by Christ.—Josephus's Account of Tiberias.—Ruins of an Ancient City.—Tiberias the Seat of Rabbinical Learning.—Modern Tiberias.—The Lake of Tiberias.—Ships and Fishermen on the Lake.—The Apostles chosen from amongst Fishermen.—Modes of Fishing.—Fishing by Torch-light.—Simon Peter and the Fisher's Coat.

May 15th. Evening.

BETWEEN Seffûrieh and Nazareth the country is tame and featureless; but the view of Nazareth, when first seen as one approaches from the north, with its encircling hills giving the idea of protection and repose; its green vale, its olive-orchards and fields of waving wheat bespeaking peace and plenty, and the town itself reflecting the golden light of the setting sun, awakened thoughts of security and quiet home life.

For my part, I greatly prefer to find the earthly home of the Virgin Mary and "the child Jesus" in such calm seclusion, than in the midst of the turmoil and hard worldliness of a crowded city. Nor is there anything about the place, thus beheld, to suggest the question with which Nathanael responded to the invitation of Philip, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?"[1]

You have come and seen for yourself, and most emphatically I accord with your opinion, or rather feeling. There is a certain appropriateness in the divine ordination by which He who made all things out of nothing, "and without whom was not anything made that was made," should come forth to the world out of a place that has no history.

It is certainly remarkable that Nazareth, so dear to the Christian heart, is not once mentioned in the Old Testament.

Nor alluded to even by Josephus, who was himself on every side of it, and names the villages all about it. Doubtless it was then a small hamlet, hid away in this narrow vale, and of no political importance. Its insignificance probably preserved it from molestation by the Romans during their destructive wars in Galilee. After the birth of Jesus it seems to have remained for several centuries an obscure village, inhabited chiefly by Jews. Even in the time of Eusebius and Jerome, who were the first to mention it after the Evangelists, Nazareth remained apparently an unimportant place. Nor have we any account of Christian pilgrimages to it until long after the age of Constantine.

The continuous history of Nazareth dates from the period of the Crusades. After the conquest of Jerusalem by them, this part of Galilee was given to Tancred by Godfrey de Bouillon. That noble leader administered the province with justice, and his memory was long cherished in this region. He erected churches not only in Nazareth, but also in Tiberias and upon Mount Tabor. The seat of the bishopric of Palæstina Secunda was transferred from

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[1] John i. 43–51.

Scythopolis, Beisân, to Nazareth, and it continued to prosper until the overthrow of the Frank dominion by Saladin, at the battle of Hattîn, in 1187, when "the birthplace of Christianity was lost to the Christians" even to this day.

Subsequently, both the town and its churches were entirely destroyed by Bibars, the Sultân of Egypt. All Christians were expelled from it, and it continued to be for several centuries inhabited only by Moslems. In 1620 the famous Druse Emir, Fakr ed Dîn, subdued this part of Palestine, and by him permission was given to some Franciscan monks to rebuild the ruined Church of the Annunciation, and to erect a convent near it. Since then Nazareth has continued to be a Christian village, poor and often grievously oppressed, and at times almost entirely deserted.

Maundrell, who visited it near the close of the seventeenth century, says: "Nazareth is at present only an inconsiderable village, situated in a kind of round concave valley, on the top of a high hill. We were entertained at the convent built over the place of the annunciation. At this place are, as it were immured, seven or eight Latin fathers, who live a life truly mortified, being perpetually in fear of the Arabs, who are absolute lords of the country."[1] Nor was its condition essentially improved until after the beginning of the present century.

In 1799 the French army under Napoleon Bonaparte besieged Acre, and obtained a temporary possession of the country around Nazareth. Below it, on Esdraelon, was fought that famous battle at el Fûleh with a Turkish force of over twenty-five thousand men, which, as you will remember, was defeated by Kleber with less than a tenth of that number. After the retreat of the French from Acre, Jezzâr Pasha threatened to massacre all the Christians in this region, but was prevented from executing his bloody purpose by the energetic remonstrance of the English Admiral, Sir Sidney Smith, who had assisted in the repulse of the French army.

During the present century Nazareth has gradually increased in size and importance, and is at present the chief town in this district. It is probably more prosperous now than at any former period in its history. The town is divided into three harât, or quarters. In the one on the west side the Latins and Maronites reside; that on the north, called Harât er Rûm, is occupied mainly by the Greeks. Harât el Islâm, or Moslem quarter, is in the eastern part of the town, and is much the smallest of the three.

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[1] Early Travels, Apl. 18, p. 477.

Some fine buildings have lately been erected, including the English church and parsonage, and the institution for orphan girls, sustained by the Female Educational Society in England; and the town is extending northward and eastward towards the fountain.

Nazareth, clinging to the hill-side, with its square white houses, and flat terraced roofs, in some places overhanging a small precipice, in others standing out boldly on slight eminences overlooking the valley below, lies mostly along and upon the lower declivities of the hills which rise high above it on the west and north-west. The shallow valley descends gently southward towards the plain of Esdraelon, about two miles distant, and is bordered here and there with thorny cactus, which serves also to hedge in the fields and gardens dotted with the olive, the fig, the pomegranate, and other fruit-trees. The surrounding hills are mostly destitute of trees, and the soil is thin, showing the white cretaceous rock in all directions.

The latest estimate of the population gives one thousand five hundred Moslems, two thousand orthodox Greeks, two hundred Greek Catholics, six hundred Latins, three hundred Maronites, and one hundred Protestants—in all four thousand seven hundred. But this is merely an approximation, and may be too low. Nazareth will never grow into a large city. Its position is not favorable for commerce, and there is a distressing scarcity of water. Even at this early season there is an incessant contest for a jar of it around the Fountain of the Annunciation, which is the only one in the village.

The growth of Nazareth is mainly owing to the inroads of the Arabs from beyond Jordan, which rendered it unsafe to reside in Beisân and on the plain of Esdraelon. Many places have been deserted, and the inhabitants have retired from the plains to Jennin, Nazareth, and farther west towards the sea-board. Should a strong government drive the Bedawîn over the Jordan, and keep them there, the population and importance of Nazareth would decline. It must, however, always be a spot especially sacred to the whole Christian world, for here our blessed Saviour passed the greater part of his life while on earth.

What a profound silence rests upon those thirty years of mysterious existence!

We only know that here, in Nazareth, Jesus grew up from infancy to childhood and youth, increasing in stature and in knowledge, and in favor both with God and man, as no other child ever has done. Here, too, he spent the years of his ripening manhood in humble labors, and in sinless communion with God. How natural the desire to acquaint ourselves with the daily life of Jesus! Hence the spurious gospels of the infancy of Jesus, full of puerile or profane fables. Let any one curious to see what uninspired man makes of the early life of Jesus, turn to the "Gospels of the Infancy," or the "Gospel of Nicodemus," and he will be devoutly thankful to know that they are miserable forgeries, now rejected by all.

With the single exception of the visit to Jerusalem, when Jesus was twelve years old, there is not one authentic anecdote of his life during all those thirty years previous to his public ministry. And, further, there are no remains of the ancient Nazareth itself which can now be identified; for it is nearly certain that every stone of the small hamlet where the Saviour of the world spent so many years has long ago crumbled to dust, and mingled with the soil of the hills from which it was originally quarried. The rock disintegrates with great rapidity; and, as the place was often almost or quite destroyed and forsaken, the soft stones thus exposed would soon disappear.

Nor need we regret it. I feel assured that the Church of the Annunciation, the cave, the kitchen of Mary, the workshop of Joseph, the dining-table of our Lord and his apostles, the synagogue where he read the Prophet Isaiah, and the precipice down which his enraged fellow-villagers were determined to cast him headlong, as now shown to the pilgrim and the tourist, are all apocryphal, and have no claims to veneration or even respect. The eye rests on nothing with which our Lord was familiar, except the natural features of the place and the surrounding hills. These remain

EN NÂSIRAH—NAZARETH.

essentially the same. Nazareth and its narrow vale, shut in on all sides by the swelling eminences of the encircling hills, are now very much what they were then. To the fountain the young Jesus came for water, just as the children now do with their "pitchers." Our Saviour would often climb to the top of the western hill, which rises about five hundred feet above the bottom of the wady. There he could behold the distant sea, and breathe the cool fresh air. From thence, too, his eye would range over a vast expanse of sacred scenery. We can do the same; and in the doing of it hold converse with his spirit, and enjoy what he enjoyed, without one doubt to trouble, or one fable of meddling monk to disturb.

In Matthew ii. 23, we read that Jesus "came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene." But in the Old Testament it is nowhere said that he should be so named.

Various explanations have been suggested, none of them very satisfactory, however. Some maintain that the name Nazareth is derived from the Hebrew nêtser, which signifies a shoot, or sprout, and that this name was actually given to the promised Messiah by Isaiah; also, that the same figurative name is applied to him by other prophets, though they use different words to express the same idea.[1] That is to say, that he should be not only of the royal stock, but also that his temporal condition should be humble—"a rod out of the stem of Jesse, a Branch out of his roots."

Matthew does not mention any particular prophet; but the idea seems to be that the name Nazareth, in its radical signification, combined the meaning of different prophetical representations of the Messiah, all of which are implied, as is supposed, in the word nêtser—"a tender plant, a root out of dry ground." "He is despised and rejected of men: a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." "A branch and a king to grow up unto David." He was to be of the stock of David, but in his temporal circumstances he was to be poor. Matthew is believed to have written his Gospel with reference to Hebrew disciples, and to have adopted a rabbinical style or method of interpretation especially agreeable to them; hence his reference to "the prophets."

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[1] Isa. xi. 1; Jer. xxiii. 5; xxxiii. 15; Zech. iii. 8; vi. 12.

That Jesus was actually called "a Nazarene," or "of Nazareth," and from the city where he dwelt, is admitted by all. This designation appears to have carried with it a degree of reproach, if not of actual contempt; for the Galileans, and the Nazarenes as well, were especially odious to the Jews, owing mainly to the commingling of various foreign races in that province. But it was not until after the crucifixion of Jesus that the Jews applied that name to his disciples as a term of derision and scorn.[1] In this country the name has become general, and all Christians are now called Nŭsâra, from en Nâsirah, the Arabic name of this place; and we ourselves are also so named by all classes of the people.

The word Nazarene, it may be well to remember, has no reference to those persons amongst the Hebrews called Nazarites. They were consecrated to a special religious life, in some respects similar to that of the hermits. Christ himself was far from being a Nazarite, in the general acceptation of that term. Neither did he require his disciples to adopt such a course of life. He came, "eating and drinking" such things as were set before him, "asking no questions for conscience' sake;" and he taught his followers to do the same.

It is growing late. The tinkling bells from the fold fall faintly on the ear; the drowsy shepherds watch over their flocks; the lights are out in the village; no sound disturbs the silence of the night; and upon the home of the Holy Family, and the abode of the world's Redeemer,

The timely dew of sleep
Now falls with soft, slumberous weight.

May 16th.

You have been making good use of this bright morning, I suppose, for you left the tent at an early hour?

I went at the call of the bell, and heard the monks say Mass in the Church of the Annunciation. The solemn appearance of the edifice, the mellow tones of the organ, and the impressive chanting of the monks, were quite affecting in this strange land and sacred place at early dawn. But there is little satisfaction in looking at shrines in which one has no faith, or in examining institutions for which very little respect is entertained. The convent appeared to me more like a castle than a house of prayer, but I suppose it is none too strong to keep out robbers.

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[1] Acts xxiv. 5.

Passing through its iron gates, I went in search of the "Mount of Precipitation;" and, were it not so far from the village, it would be well adapted to the murderous purpose which animated the townsmen of our Lord. I rather suspect, however, that the bold cliff overhanging the plain of Esdraelon was selected by the monks because of its striking appearance, and the grand prospect which it commands. My guide pointed out a small ruin much nearer the precipice, which, he said, marked the traditional site of the original village; and this would relieve the difficulty as to distance. But if Nazareth in the days of our Lord was near that ruin, what becomes of the sacred sites and shrines now shown within the present town?

On my way back through the upper part of the town, I found precipices of sufficient height for the requirements of the narrative in Luke.[1] Most of them, it is true, appear to be partly artificial, made by quarrying away the rock; but doubtless there were similar excavations in ancient days. I stopped, also, at the Fountain of the Annunciation, according to the Greek tradition, and, amongst other things, attempted to purchase one of those singular rolls of old coins which the girls of Nazareth bind around their foreheads and cheeks; but I could not succeed in my negotiation, for they refused to sell at any price. Most travellers, ancient and modern, speak of the beauty of these girls, and not altogether without reason. To me, however, they appear unusually bold, and that greatly depreciates their good looks. I fear that an intimate acquaintance with the Nazareth of to-day might lead me to ask the very question of Nathanael, and therefore I am ready to prosecute our pilgrimage.

The only preliminary is breakfast, and that has been waiting for half an hour. We send the tents to Tiberias, and go thither ourselves by way of Tabor.

I have the impression, or, more accurately perhaps, a feeling, that our visit to Nazareth has been so brief that the memory I carry away of this most sacred place and its surrounding scenery will not be as vivid and abiding as I could wish.

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[1] Luke iv. 28–30.

In arranging the programme for this part of our pilgrimage, I should have remembered that this is your first and only visit. Still, why should we linger about the Nazareth which the eye now beholds? By no power of the imagination can the scenery be lifted up out of its quiet rural simplicity. It lacks the elements of grandeur and magnificence. The town itself is not much larger than an ordinary village, though many of the religious edifices are exceptionally capacious and imposing. I cannot look upon some of them, however, without remembering the stupendous deceptions they are intended to conceal and perpetuate.

Visit the Franciscan convent, for example, the most massive building in the place, and you will be conducted by a reverend monk of that order into the Church of the Annunciation, and down the fifteen marble steps leading to the Holy Grotto, beneath the high altar of the church. You first enter the Chapel of the Angels, and then pass through between two altars into the Chapel of Annunciation, encased in marble, and hung with silver lamps, and so called because over it, according to the tradition, once stood the house of the Virgin, where she is said to have received the salutation of the angel. There your attention will be particularly directed to a marble slab in front of the altar, with a cross in the centre, worn by the kisses of devout pilgrims, and bearing this inscription: "Hic verbum caro factum est." On the left of the entrance is the column of Gabriel, marking the spot where that angel stood; and near it is part of a marble column, above which the fragment of a granite pillar is pointed out, said to be miraculously suspended from the roof over the place where the Virgin sat during the visit of the angel. On the right is the entrance to the Chapel of Joseph. It has an altar, and the inscription, "Hic erat subditus illis." From there you will be conducted up some steps hewn in the rock to the kitchen of the Virgin, doubtless an old cistern, the mouth of which is made to do duty as the chimney.

In the Moslem quarter, north-east of the convent, is the house and workshop of Joseph. The Latins have built a chapel over it. An altar, a painting representing Joseph at work assisted by Jesus, and part of the old wall of the house itself, reward the pilgrim for his visit to this shrine. Descending and crossing over to the western part of the town, you will be taken to the Chapel of the Table of Christ, or "Mensa Christi." Here you will be shown a portion of the solid rock, about twelve feet by ten feet, and three feet high. That is the table upon which Christ and his disciples are said to have dined, both before and after the Resurrection. This, also, belongs to the Latins. Finally, the Greek Catholics will show you, in the market-place, the traditional site of the synagogue where the Jews rose up against Christ, thrust him out, and led him to the brow of the hill that they might cast him headlong.

Now there are connected with the Holy Grotto, and all the other holy places, deceptions and frauds enough to shake a faith that could move mountains; and some of them have been adopted and perpetuated by the infallible Papal Church. The House of the Virgin, for the existence of which, at that particular spot, there is no evidence, and for which there is no room, even, on the site pointed out, was, it is affirmed, carried bodily by angels far away to the heights above Fiume, near the head of the Adriatic.

After various adventures, and one removal to Recanati, across the sea in Italy, it was finally located at Loretto, not far off, and south of Ancona. There, under the sheltering walls of the magnificent Church of Our Lady of Loretto, it is visited at this day by thousands of devout pilgrims. This miserable delusion is "fostered by the Supreme Head of the Roman Church itself." I have not been to Loretto, but those who have tell us that the Santa Casa, or Holy House of the Virgin, originally a brick or stone room, thirty-six feet long by seventeen feet wide, with door and window, is now encased in marble, and adorned with bass-reliefs, marvels of art and costliness, relating to the history of the Virgin.

It may be possible for some pious and cultivated tourists to visit the scene of that astounding legend with no other feelings than those of pity and amazement. But to me such sights are inexpressibly painful. I cannot forget that some two hundred millions of our common brotherhood, who bear the Christian name, are commanded by their religious teachers to accept as facts such monstrous fables. This Franciscan convent here in Nazareth owes its origin to similar deceptions and manifest frauds; and its present pecuniary support is derived largely from the belief in them. Hence I cannot regard that edifice with any complacency, and have no desire to visit its holy places again.

Many weary pilgrims and storm-stayed travellers enter and leave those premises with sentiments far different, and look back with grateful hearts to the shelter and kindness they there enjoyed. Others, who cannot forget what so confounds and stumbles the faith of intelligent and honest minds, would still tone down the severity of your condemnation, with a sigh of compassion for those who are, so to speak, officially bound to uphold these deplorable delusions. They resemble what Gibbon has so aptly styled "a necessary fiction," in the Moslem declaration of faith.

It may be so; but let us drop the subject. The tents have been folded and strapped, and the mules are loaded.

We will therefore ride up to Neby Isma'îl on that rounded hill-top north-west of the village, from where you may obtain, and retain, one of the finest and most characteristic views of Nazareth, and the regions round about it. Although the ascent is steep, you will never regret having made it.

It gives no adequate idea of the view from this Neby to say that it is indeed vast, varied, and most impressive.

Dr. Robinson has given an admirable and comprehensive description of this grand panorama. He says:

"I walked out alone to the top of the hill over Nazareth, where stands the neglected Wely of Neby Isma'îl. Here, quite unexpectedly, a glorious prospect opened on the view. The air was perfectly clear and serene; and I shall never forget the impression I received as the enchanting panorama burst suddenly upon me. There lay the magnificent plain of Esdraelon, or at least all its western part; on the left was seen the round top of Tabor over the intervening hills, with portions of the little Hermon and Gilboa, and the opposite mountains of Samaria, from Jenîn westward to the lower hills extending towards Carmel. Then came the long line of Carmel itself, with the Convent of Elias on its northern end, and Haifa on the shore at its foot.

"In the west lay the Mediterranean, gleaming in the morning sun; seen first far in the south on the left of Carmel; then interrupted by that mountain; and again appearing on its right, so as to include the whole Bay of 'Akka, and the coast stretching far north to a point north ten degrees west. 'Akka was not visible, being hidden by intervening hills. Below, on the north, was spread out another of the beautiful plains of northern Palestine, called el Bŭttauf: it runs from east to west, and its waters are drained off westward through a narrower valley, to the Kishon (el Mŭttuka'), at the base of Carmel.

"On the southern border of this plain, the eye rested on a large village near the foot of an isolated hill, with a ruined castle on the top; this was Seffûrieh, the ancient Sepphoris, or Diocæsarea. Beyond the plain el Bŭttauf, long ridges running from east to west rise, one higher than another, until the mountains of Safed overtop them all, on which that place is seen, 'a city set upon a hill.' Farther towards the right is a sea of hills and mountains, backed by the higher ones beyond the Lake of Tiberias, and in the north-east by the majestic Hermon with its icy crown.

"Seating myself in the shade of the Wely, I remained for some hours upon this spot, lost in the contemplation of the wide prospect, and of the events connected with the scenes around. In the village below, the Saviour of the world had passed his childhood; and although we have few particulars of his life during those early years, yet there are certain features of nature which meet our eyes now, just as they once met his. He must often have visited the fountain near which we had pitched our tent; his feet must frequently have wandered over the adjacent hills; and his eyes, doubtless, have gazed upon the splendid prospect from this very spot.

"Here the Prince of Peace looked down upon the great plain, where the din of battles so oft had rolled, and the garments of the warrior been dyed in blood; and he looked out, too, upon that sea, over which the swift ships were to bear the tidings of his salvation to nations and to continents then unknown. How has the moral aspect of things been changed! Battles and bloodshed have, indeed, not ceased to desolate this unhappy country, and gross darkness now covers the people; but from this region a light went forth which has enlightened the world, and unveiled new climes;

and now the rays of that light begin to be reflected back from distant isles and continents, to illuminate anew the darkened land where it first sprung up."[1]

We cannot linger here, notwithstanding the special attractions of the place; and, though it would be easier to pass along the ridge above Nazareth on the north, we will descend to the village and fill our "bottles" from the fountain, for at this season of the year water is scarce along our route until we reach the Jordan.

The Fountain of the Virgin must always have been, as it is now, the only one in the town?

Yes; and these women and children, coming and going to and from the 'Ain, as the village fountain is called, with their jars and pitchers; this picturesque and motley crowd grouped around it, contributing their share to the din and confusion while waiting their turn; this noise of many voices arguing as to who came first —all these are sights and scenes as natural to-day as they must have been when Mary, accompanied by "the child Jesus," came here to draw water. You have travelled over the dry and thirsty road from Jericho to Bethany and Jerusalem, so did He; you have sat on Jacob's Well, so did He; and now drink of the water of this fountain, for Jesus must often have done the same.

It bears the name of the Virgin from the tradition that here she first received the salutation of the angel, and the Greek Church of the Annunciation is built over the traditional spot. The source of the spring is north of the church, but the stream flows past the altar, and water is drawn up from it there for the Greek pilgrims, who esteem it sacred to the taste and healing to the body. From thence it is led by a conduit of rough stone to the present vaulted arch, where it pours out from several places into the stone tank, probably an old sarcophagus. The surplus water is used to irrigate the gardens of the town.

The church, with its bell-tower, is plain and small, but more attractive from without than it is within. It belongs to the Orthodox Greeks, and is built partly underground, having a grotto, now used as a chapel, beneath. Though comparatively a modern edifice, it has been frequently repaired.

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[1] Rob. Res. vol. ii. p. 336–338.

CHURCH OF THE ANNUNCIATION, AND FOUNTAIN OF THE VIRGIN.

We have now reached the top of the eastern hill on our way "toward Mount Tabor," and, ere we lose sight of Nazareth, let us pause and take a farewell view of the home on earth of the Divine Redeemer.

The scene of his early life is altogether in harmony with his character. It is "holy ground;" and whatever may or must be said of its inhabitants, ancient or modern, let us remember that the greatest good God has ever bestowed upon our world did "come out of Nazareth."

And now for "beautiful Tabor," the Mount of the Transfiguration, according to tradition.

It is about five miles to the north-western base of Tabor, whence only the mount can be ascended on horseback. The road thither winds over the hills, and down a long wady to the plain, a short distance north of Debûrieh. We, however, shall not follow the valley, but keep round farther north, and approach the mount from the oak woods which lie between it and esh Shajerah.

The name Debûrieh brings to mind that of the heroine and prophetess, who summoned Barak to Tabor with his ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun, to fight against Sisera.[1]

It is probably the modern representative of Daberath, which, though belonging to the tribe of Issachar, was given to the Levites,[2] and of Dabiritta mentioned by Josephus, and the Dabira of Eusebius and Jerome. The ruins of what is said to have been a Christian Church are still visible.

Although every artist who comes in sight of Tabor is sure to take a sketch of that mount, their pictures differ widely, owing mainly to the points whence they were taken. The most impressive view, perhaps, is from the plain between it and Endor. Seen from the south or north, Tabor describes nearly an arc of a great circle; from the east it is a broad truncated cone, rounded off at the top; from the west it is wedge-shaped, rising to a moderate height above the neighboring hills. Its true figure is an elongated oval, the longitudinal diameter running nearly east and west.

The mount is entirely composed of cretaceous limestone, as are the hills west and north of it, but all to the east is volcanic. The southern face of Tabor is nearly bare, but the northern is clothed to the top with a forest of oak and terebinth, mingled with the beautiful mock-orange, and the road, if road it may be called, leading to the summit, winds up through them. Notwithstanding the experience of other travellers, I have always found the ascent difficult, and in certain parts actually dangerous.

It has taken us an hour and a half, pleasant riding, from Nazareth to the base of Tabor.

And now for the exciting and romantic climb. I will lead the way, with the hint to look well to your horse, lest you change romance to tragedy before we get up.

The plain of Esdraelon is seen to the greatest advantage, not from the summit, but from this projecting terrace which we have now reached, some four hundred feet above Debûrieh. It appears like one vast carpet thrown back to the hills of Samaria and the foot of Carmel. In variety of patterns and richness of colors it is not surpassed by any other plain in this country. Both the Mediterranean Sea and the Lake of Tiberias are visible from a point near the summit, the former to the north-west, and the latter on the north-east. The Dead Sea, however, cannot be seen from any part of Tabor, probably owing to the silvery haze which fills the Ghôr of the Jordan in that direction. There is often an actual mirage, which would mislead any one not previously aware of such phenomena.

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[1] Judges iv. 4–10.

[2] Josh. xix. 12; xxi. 28; 1 Chron. vi. 72.

Here we are on the summit of Tabor, about two thousand feet above the level of the sea, and from six hundred to one thousand feet higher than the surrounding plain, according as one approaches from the north or the south! Let us breathe our tired animals beneath this fine old oak at the entrance into the fortress. You observe that a fosse once protected the wall on this part of the summit, because it is less precipitous than elsewhere. The narrow plot on the north side, I suppose, was levelled to its present shape by the inhabitants of the ancient city, possibly for gardens, or for public places of amusement. South of this a rocky ridge rises some fifty feet higher; and the summit was surrounded by a heavy wall, strengthened with towers at suitable distances, and further defended by a ditch.

These works are obviously of different ages, and the history of the place fully accounts for them. Parts of the fortifications may be Jewish, but it is quite impossible to distinguish the various styles of architecture with certainty. Nothing remains now but a confused mass of broken walls, bastions, towers, vaults, cisterns, and houses, some of which indicate the sites of the churches and convents erected by the Crusaders. The Greek Church has recently fitted up two or three vaults as a chapel, and the Latin monks from Nazareth also celebrate mass here on certain festivals. I once saw a large procession, with drums and cymbals, loud singing and clapping of hands, and the indispensable roar of muskets, set out from that town to keep the feast of the Transfiguration here at these forsaken shrines.

Unlike Nazareth, Tabor is often mentioned in the Old Testament. It was one of the landmarks on the boundary between Zebulun and Issachar. There was a town on the mount, probably of the same name, and no doubt fortified, at or before the time of Joshua.[1] Tabor was occupied by Barak the night before the battle with Sisera, described in the fourth, and celebrated in the fifth, chapter of Judges, in that sublime ode of Deborah. "The two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna," slew the brethren of Gideon at Tabor, for which deed they were themselves put to death by him, after his great victory over the Midianites.[2]

The shape of Tabor, and the majestic proportions of Hermon, may have suggested the association of the two in the eighty-ninth Psalm: "Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name." To any one standing on the top of Tabor, and looking towards the north-east, Jebel esh Sheikh, as Hermon is now called, is the one object that fascinates the beholder. In the mind's eye of the poet, therefore, the two combined to complete the picture—Tabor for beauty of form, Hermon for grandeur and sublimity: "The north and the south thou hast created them:" they "shall rejoice in thy name." Jeremiah says, "Surely as Tabor is among the mountains, and as Carmel by the sea, so shall he come;" that is to say, so certainly would "Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon come and smite the land of Egypt."[3]

The beautiful oak groves on Tabor were, no doubt, the chosen resort of the priests and people of Israel, when, in times of apostasy, they erected idols "upon every high hill, in all the tops of the mountains, and under every thick oak."[4] This was the moral "net spread upon Tabor," mentioned by the prophet Hosea; for, as Dean Stanley remarks, Tabor may have been, in some remote age, "the sanctuary of the northern tribes, if not of the whole nation."[5]

Tabor is never lost sight of either by the Hebrew historian or the poet, and it has a story many times too long for us to repeat —Canaanitish, Jewish, Greek, Roman, Christian, Crusading, Saracenic, and Turkish. And yet it is nowhere mentioned in the New Testament.

[1] Josh. xix. 12, 22; I Chron. vi. 77.
[2] Judg. viii. 18–21.
[3] Jer. xlvi. 13, 18
[4] Ezek. vi. 13.
[5] Hos. v. 1; Sinai and Palestine, p. 347.

JEBEL ET TÛR—MOUNT TABOR.

Do you suppose that this was the "high mountain apart," to which Jesus took Peter, James, and John, "and was transfigured before them"?

The tradition is as old at least as the fourth century, in the time of Eusebius and Jerome; and if we hesitate to admit the claim of Tabor to be the scene of the Transfiguration, it is not from any unfitness of the mount itself. A more appropriate site for such a glorious manifestation could not be desired. Nor does the fact that there may have been a fortified city on the summit at that time present an insuperable difficulty. There are many secluded terraces on the north and north-east sides admirably adapted for the scenes of the Transfiguration, and I regret that the early faith in this site has been disturbed. All that we know about it is found in Matthew xvii., Mark ix., and Luke ix., which contain nothing decisive against the claims of Tabor.

But, however we may dispose of this question, Tabor, or Jebel et Tûr, as it is now called, will always be invested with special interest. Its remarkable shape and striking appearance would command admiration in any country, and the magnificent outlook from the summit will continue to attract pilgrims and tourists thither.

But it is time to descend, and pursue our ride to Tiberias, whither our tents have preceded us. There is no path but the one we came up, for on the south and east the declivity is too precipitous for roads. I once attempted to find my way down in that direction towards Khân et Tujjâr, but did not succeed, and was obliged to return to our present path. The road to that Khân, which we shall follow after descending to the foot of the mount, leads through oak woods for more than an hour to the north-east of Tabor, where the forest and the limestone formation on which it grows terminate together. Below, and east to the valley of the Jordan, the country is volcanic, and destitute of trees.

The woods are park-like, and extend several miles northward from the base of Tabor. The ride through them in early spring, when the trees are vocal with the song of birds, and the surface is spangled with innumerable flowers, is romantic and delightful; but already the woods are silent, the grass and flowers seared and faded, and the atmosphere is close and oppressive. Happily, we have not far to go, for there, on the north-east, is Khân et Tujjâr, "the Inn of the Merchants," where we will rest and take our lunch. The wady in which the Khân is situated is called Mîdy. It comes from the north-west, drains that part of the forest, and passes down south-east to the Sherâr and the Jordan.

KHÂN ET TUJJÂR—INN OF THE MERCHANTS.

There are two Khâns, one on a hill, about one hundred feet square, having octagonal towers on the corners. It served the double purpose of castle and caravanserai. The other, in the vale below, was much larger. It had a division through the centre, with vaults and magazines on either side, and the great advantage of a fountain of water within the walls. It was fitted up with rooms for the protection of merchandise and the accommodation of travellers. The place is now almost deserted, nor is there an inhabited house in sight. Caravans do not spend the night there for fear of Arabs, who prowl about, watching for an opportunity to rob. I have never stopped there for half an hour without having some of those rascals pass along and scrutinize my party closely, to see whether they could attack us.

On Monday of each week a great fair is held at the Khâns, when, for a few hours, the scene is very lively and picturesque. These gatherings, as at Sûk el Khân, near Hâsbeiya, afford an excellent opportunity to observe Syrian manners, customs, and costumes, and to become acquainted with the character and quality of her productions. Hundreds of people assemble from all parts of the country, either to sell, trade, or purchase, but before sunset not a soul of the busy throng remains on the spot. All return home, or take refuge in some neighboring village. I attended on one occasion, and then took my way eastward to the valley of the Jordan, at Jisr el Mejâmi'a, in search of 'Akil Aga.

The country between the Khân and the bridge, for the first three miles, is a rich, volcanic plain. The path then leads down to a brook called esh Shâra, which descends from the north, past a village of the same name. The water, foul and yellow, flows off in a deep gorge to the Sherâr. Half an hour farther is M'adera, with hovels nearly concealed behind hills of manure. The only beings at work about the village were the bees, whose hives were more than the houses, and the air rung with the hum of those industrious purveyors of honey. Two miles farther east is Hadîtheh, large and better built, with a great chasm in the valley below it, washed out of the surrounding bluffs by the fountains which issue from their crumbling banks.

That region was thickly inhabited until quite recently. Little more than a mile from Hadîtheh is 'Aulâm, a large village in ruins. It is probably the Ulama of Eusebius and Jerome. It has excellent water, and very large fig-trees still flourishing, although it was sacked and destroyed by the Arabs only a few years ago, as was also the next village, called Sîrîn. Riding for three hours through that depopulated country, I suddenly descended into the valley of the Jordan, having the gorge of the Sherâr between me and Kaukab el Hawa, "the meteor of the air," the splendidly-situated Crusading castle of Belvoir, or Belvedere.

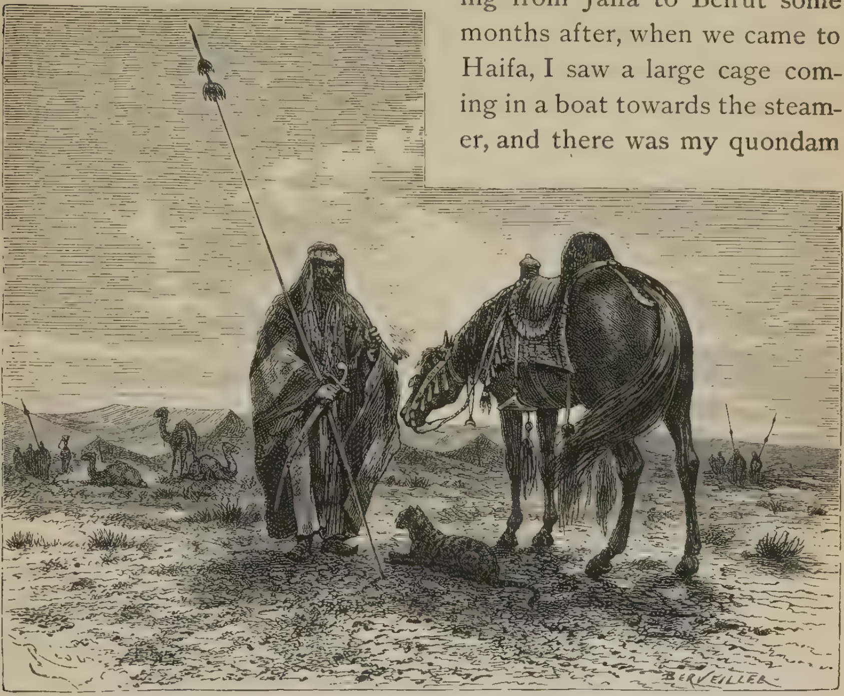
The descent to the Jisr was rough, and extremely steep. It is difficult to remember or to realize that the Jordan is there eight hundred feet lower than the sea. Down, down I walked, until, quite tired out, I resumed the saddle. The entire valley of the Jordan, or the Ghôr, as it is called, presented a most singular appearance. It is far from level, tilted up, in fact, into fantastic hills and shelving bluffs by dikes of obtruding lava. Half-way down I came upon the ruins of a large place called Khŭrbet Yedma, evidently ancient. The Ghôr was alive with Bedawîn, dotted with tents, and covered with flocks.

I pitched my tent at sunset near that of the Aga, and tried in vain to sleep. An intensely hot sirocco had commenced to blow, and this made every man and beast in that large encampment as restless as myself. Early next morning, while sitting in my tent door smoking a nargileh, I was startled to see a nimr, or panther, scouring the plain in full chase *of* a pack of dogs that had attacked him. Making a long circle, the dogs swept around my tent, when the panther left them, leaped over the corner of the tent, tossed my nargileh to the winds, and then bounded away after the dogs. In another minute he returned, sprang on to the top of the tent, and laid himself down there.

I was confounded, but sat still, and he soon jumped from the tent and crouched down close to my feet. He was out of breath, and panted violently. Though not at all pleased to have the fierce brute so near, I kept my eye steadily fixed on his. He remained quiet until his keeper came from the Aga's tent to recapture him. Then he growled fiercely, and was disposed to fight for his liberty; nor was it until they brought some fresh meat that they were able to get hold of him. He was a tame nimr, so far as panthers can be tamed, brought up by the Aga to hunt gazelles.

The Aga told me that nimrs require seven years to complete their growth, and a constant course of careful training all that time to make them good hunters. The nimr is extremely cunning in his approach—lies flat on his belly, and creeps almost insensibly towards his victim. His color is so like the ground and surrounding grass that the Aga said even he could not keep track of him. The nimr will manœuvre for hours, until finally within leaping distance, when he springs with one tremendous bound upon his terrified prey. If he misses, he gives over for that time, nor will anything induce him to follow up the chase.

I was glad enough to get rid of the panther, but, strange to say, I met him again under very different circumstances. Returning from Jaffa to Beirût some months after, when we came to Haifa, I saw a large cage coming in a boat towards the steamer, and there was my quondam acquaintance en route to Paris! The Aga had sent him to the Emperor through the French consul of Beirût. The poor beast was miserably sea-sick, which made him perfectly furious. Leaping with all his might against the bars, he broke through, and seized a passenger who was standing near, and it was only by enveloping him in a heavy sail that he was subdued, and forced back into his cage.



'AKIL AGA, AND HIS HORSE AND PANTHER.

Lieutenant Lynch thus describes 'Akil Aga: "I also engaged the services of a magnificent savage, who was the handsomest, and I soon thought, also, the most graceful being I had ever seen. His complexion was of a rich, indescribable olive tint; his hair was glossy black; his teeth were regular, and of the whitest ivory; and the glance of his eye was keen at times, but generally soft and lustrous. He was a distinguished sheikh of the Bedawîn, and had been the year before at the head of several tribes in rebellion against the Turkish Government, which, unable to subdue him, had bought him in with a pelisse of honor, and a commission corresponding to that of Colonel of the Irregular Arabs."[1]

David says of "the wicked," "He croucheth and humbleth himself to catch the poor."[2] It is true that the Psalmist is comparing the wicked to the lion, but the description applies so accurately to the wily manœuvres of the hunting nimr that I imagine the royal poet must have also been acquainted with him and his ways.

This is certainly possible; for, in his early pastoral life, David was familiar with the bear as well as the lion. Both these have disappeared from the hills where the son of Jesse tended his father's flocks, but the nimr still abounds there.

The country through which we have been passing since leaving Khân et Tujjâr seems never to have been inhabited. What place are we going to reach at the end of this weary descent, stumbling over these black lava bowlders?

The regular road leads directly to the ford near the broken bridge of Um el Kanâtir, below the exit of the Jordan from the Lake of Tiberias. We have now a good view of the entire lake, and can see at a glance that it narrows rapidly on both sides, until it is not more than three miles wide at the southern extremity. The great highway from the west into Peræa, Decapolis, and the distant east, passed the Jordan at this ruined bridge to which we are coming—called Jisr Um el Kanâtir, in reference to the many high arches on which it rested. They appear to have been ten, but are all so broken and choked up with rubbish that one cannot be quite certain as to the number. The ford below it would be excellent, were it not for the fragments of the bridge which strew the bottom. The river is about three hundred feet broad, and it is not more than three feet deep, except in early spring.

The Jordan leaves the lake near the south-west corner; and its exit was commanded by the once fortified mounds on the north side, now called Tellûl Kerak, which probably mark the site of Tarichæa, so famous in the wars of the Jews against the Romans. A branch of the river once came down on the west side, thus making the site of the city an island: nor would it be difficult to make that the main outlet of the river; for even now, when the lake is high, in the latter part of winter, the water flows into the Jordan under the arches of the causeway which connected the city with the main-land.

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[1] Ex. to the Dead Sea, p. 12.

[2] Psa. x. 9, 10.

Tarichæa was the naval station of the Jews in the time of their wars. Josephus collected two hundred and thirty ships at this place to attack Tiberias, and here occurred the only sea-fight between the Jews and the Romans. The "ships" probably lay at anchor within and around the outgo of the Jordan, protected by towers upon the tells. The situation is admirable for the purpose, and there is no other harbor on the whole lake. It must, therefore, have been a place of great importance, so long as there were ships to need a refuge from the wild winds which often sweep over it.

How different the condition of these shores now, from the time when Josephus could gather at this point so many ships in a single day! There is not at this hour a ship of any kind upon the lake. Josephus, however, who lived, and sailed, and fought on it in the time of the apostles, abundantly corroborates their accounts of the ships that then sailed over it; and my experience confirms all the other phenomena mentioned by them. Small as the lake is, and placid, in general, as a molten mirror, I have seen it lashed into fury for thirty consecutive hours by a tempest that would have wrecked such a fleet as that of Josephus, had it been exposed to its violence; and the waves ran high—high enough to have filled, or "covered the ship," as Matthew has it.[1]

Gadara, with her prostrate temples and theatres, is seated on the top of the mountain south of the great gorge of the Jarmuk; and the hot springs, or baths, of Amatha, celebrated by Eusebius, are below, on the northern bank of the river. The fountains are of large size, and the entire locality extremely interesting and wild. Until quite recently, the Christians of Nazareth held grand fairs at those baths; and they still speak of the happy times they used to enjoy there, and curse the Bedawîn, who now prowl about and render it dangerous, and at times impossible, to hold their joyous festas.

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[1] Matt. viii. 24.

Have you ever visited Gadara?

Yes; and as the excursion was made from this place down the Jordan to Jisr el Mejâmi'a, and thence to Beisân over a region which we shall not traverse, I will give you an account of that ride. We went from the outgo of the Jordan to 'Obeidîyeh in about forty minutes, and pitched our tents on the grassy banks of the river south of the conspicuous tell upon which that village is built. Just before sunset, Daoud Aga, captain of a squad of Kurdish cavalry, came down from Khân et Tujjâr, with noisy kettle-drums beating before him, according to their custom; and, leaving his troop at their round mat tents outside the village, he paid us a visit. After the usual salaams, coffee, and pipes, he returned to his camp, leaving two of his men to keep guard, because the neighborhood was just then particularly unsafe. We slept in peace; but the very next night a party of Diab Bedawîn crossed the river at the ford directly below our camp-ground, and killed Daoud Aga and one of his men, as we learned upon our return to Jisr el Mejâmi'a, when we found the whole Ghôr in confusion.

What a strange and treacherous condition of things! Nothing could have been more tranquil and peaceful than our camp on the greensward, with the river Jordan gliding gently below us. Just there it is broad, and not more than four feet deep; so that the villagers were continually fording it—men, women, and children—returning home from their fields on the east of the Jordan: a rural scene, curious as rare, and I was much amused with the behavior of all parties. Sheep, goats, and even donkeys, had to swim; and it required the constant help of the shepherds to prevent their being carried down the stream together. Cattle and horses came boldly across, and so did the men; but the women and children needed the help of the men, who brought them safe to shore. This operation was repeated at early daybreak the next morning; and a lovely morning it was, with the bright moonlight trembling and quivering on the tranquil surface of the sacred river.

The lark was high in the heavens, singing to the coming day, when we started for Jisr el Mejâmi'a, which we reached in an hour and a half.

At the Jisr we found a battalion of regular troops encamped, but the commander refused to give us a guard, or to authorize our visit to Gadara. As I had been foiled in more than one previous attempt to visit Gadara, I resolved to run the risk; and, having procured a native guide, we crossed the bridge, and rode over the plain to the north-east. That bridge, by-the-way, is the only one over the Jordan south of the Lake of Tiberias. It is built of trap-rock, and has one grand central arch, with three small ones; and beneath them rushes the Jordan, over and amongst large bowlders. We soon came to the Jarmuk, which we crossed on a bridge like the other, only longer and lower, with six arches; and below them the Jarmuk plunges into a deep, quiet pool, from which it glides noiselessly away to the Jordan just above Jisr el Mejâmi'a. North of the bridge are the ruins of a considerable town, called Delhumîyeh.

Continuing our course over the level plain for two hours, we entered the gorge of the Jarmuk, called by the Arabs Sherî'at el Manâderah. The cliffs at the entrance look like cyclopean walls, built upon a foundation of limestone, and this is repeated in various fantastic forms, the trap assuming the columnar structure in a few localities, and the scenery becoming constantly varied, wilder, and more picturesque. The river valley spreads out quite wide, and is well wooded with trees of different kinds, many of them unusually large and lofty.

At length a strong, suffocating odor of sulphur warned us that the celebrated hot springs of el Hummah were near. There are several of them, and, though quite large, they are almost concealed beneath overhanging trees and bushes. The remains of old baths show the high appreciation which the ancients attached to these waters. To my surprise, I found large parties there—men, women, and children—from Nazareth, and other places west of the Jordan, making kaif, enjoying themselves, amongst those wood-embowered springs. The water in one deep pool was pleasantly tepid, of a sky-blue color, and so utterly transparent that the bathers seemed to be floating in mere air. The whole scene and scenery, baths and bathers, was weird and grotesque in the extreme.

Dr. Merrill, of the American Palestine Exploration Society, gives the temperature of the four principal pools as follows: one hundred and fifteen, one hundred and three, ninety-two, and eighty-three degrees respectively; and the largest, that which is one hundred and three degrees of temperature, he adds, is "sixty yards in length by thirty in width, and the average depth of the water is six feet."

Having taken a hasty survey, tasted the water of the different fountains, and bathed in some of the pools, we were obliged to pursue our ride. Crossing the Jarmuk over its very rocky bed, we found it here about two feet deep, and one hundred feet wide; but, as the current is very rapid, we could not decide as to the volume of water compared with that of the Jordan above their junction at Jisr el Mejâmi'a.

You are aware that the Jarmuk is the Heiromax of classic geography, and that it drains a large portion of the Haurân, Jebel ed Derûz, and other eastern districts. Constantly increased by its many tributaries, this river works its way through extensive plains, and down deep chasms, which have never yet been explored.

The ruins of Gadara, now called Um Keis, are situated on the top of the mountain, directly south and above the hot springs, and I judge their elevation above the Lake of Tiberias to be about two thousand feet. The crest of the ridge on which Gadara was situated lies east and west, and is quite narrow. The central street ran along this ridge, and was about a mile in length, not including a colonnade, called by the natives Kŭsr el Melek, at the west end. The main street was originally paved with slabs of lava, which, in some places, still show the ruts worn by the chariot-wheels. Throughout the greater part of that street there was a double colonnade of rather small columns, some of which were of basalt, and all had Corinthian capitals. There must have been several hundreds of them.

Two theatres were on the hill-side at the east end. One faced the west, looking down the grand central avenue over a prospect of almost unparalleled extent, from Hermon on the north, to Kŭrn Sŭrtabeh on the south. It is unusually well preserved. The other fronted northward, and commanded a magnificent view of Hermon. Many of the seats are still perfect, and there are numerous vaulted chambers beneath them. In various places, especially to the east of the theatres, are many sarcophagi, mostly of hard basalt.

UM KEIS—GADARA.

Dr. Merrill says: "The [Roman] road, already mentioned, led eastward to Capitolias, now Beit er Râs, and for two or three miles beyond Gadara it was lined on both sides with costly tombs. The sarcophagi of black basalt, ornamented with numberless figures and devices, can still be counted by hundreds. Fine stone steps led down to the entrance of the tomb or vault, which was constructed of beautiful masonry, the door itself being a single slab of stone, which was often highly ornamented, as well as the lintel above it. Platforms of elegant workmanship were built on the surface of the ground, on which they [the sarcophagi] were placed, and thus exposed to public view, so that this City of the Dead was one of the principal attractions of Gadara."

The remains of Gadara indicate different ages, and some of them probably belong to a remote period of antiquity; but we know nothing about it previous to the occupation of the country by the Macedonian Greeks. Its subsequent history must be gathered from classic authors, and more particularly from Josephus, who mentions it very often. From him we learn the important fact that Gadara was made the capital of one of the five districts into which the country was divided by the Romans in the time of Gabinius, the proconsul of Syria. This district was called Gadaritis, and no doubt had a considerable territory attached to it.

Is it possible that the miracle recorded by the three Evangelists could have been performed at Gadara?[1]

No one who has actually visited that site can believe that it did take place there. Gadara is several hours' ride from the lake, on the top of a high mountain, and surrounded by scenery absolutely inconsistent with the evangelical accounts of that miracle. The utmost that can be admitted is that the spot where the demoniacs were healed and the swine rushed into the lake was at that time, or subsequently to it, included within the general district of Gadaritis, and this is probably the true meaning of the expression, "country of the Gadarenes," in Mark and Luke.

The descent from Um Keis to the Jordan at Jisr el Mejâmi'a took two hours, easy riding; first over sparsely-wooded hills, and then across a grass-covered plain about five miles wide, with nothing calling for special remark, except that it is incorrect to say that the trap-rock ceases at the river Jarmuk. The whole region for several miles farther south is covered with bowlders and scoria brought thither by the great volcanic deluge which long ages ago overwhelmed so large a portion of this country.

From Jisr el Mejâmi'a we followed the valley of the Jordan for some distance, and then turned west to Beisân, where our tents were already pitched, and our dinner waiting for us; and from that long détour let us now return to the outgo of the Jordan here at Tarichæa.

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[1] Matt. viii. 28–34; Mark v. 1–20; Luke viii. 26–40.

How strangely the river winds about, as if reluctant to leave the lake and pursue its downward course to the Dead Sea!

The channel is narrow, and the current rapid; but in the latter part of the year, when the lake is low, the river can be forded without any difficulty. There is a boat at the outgo to ferry passengers and flocks; otherwise they might be swept away by the current. On coming out of the lake, the Jordan first runs north-west, then west, south-west, and finally south, and all this within one mile. Near the ruined bridge its course is due south, but it soon departs from this western side of the plain, and makes a long détour to the east; and thus it continues meandering about in the most eccentric fashion, often darting along rocky rapids, or leaping down noisy cataracts, and then stealing silently away in some new direction, beneath overhanging willows and shady sycamores. Its manifold windings and dou-

SHOOTING THE RAPIDS OF THE JORDAN.

blings, with the green islets enclosed, are all laid down in Lieutenant Lynch's map of the course of the river. There must have been far more water when he was here than there is now, for it would be impossible for boats to pass between the rocks in safety at present. To judge from the picture we have of shooting the rapids, that exploit must have been extremely perilous, even under the most favorable circumstances.

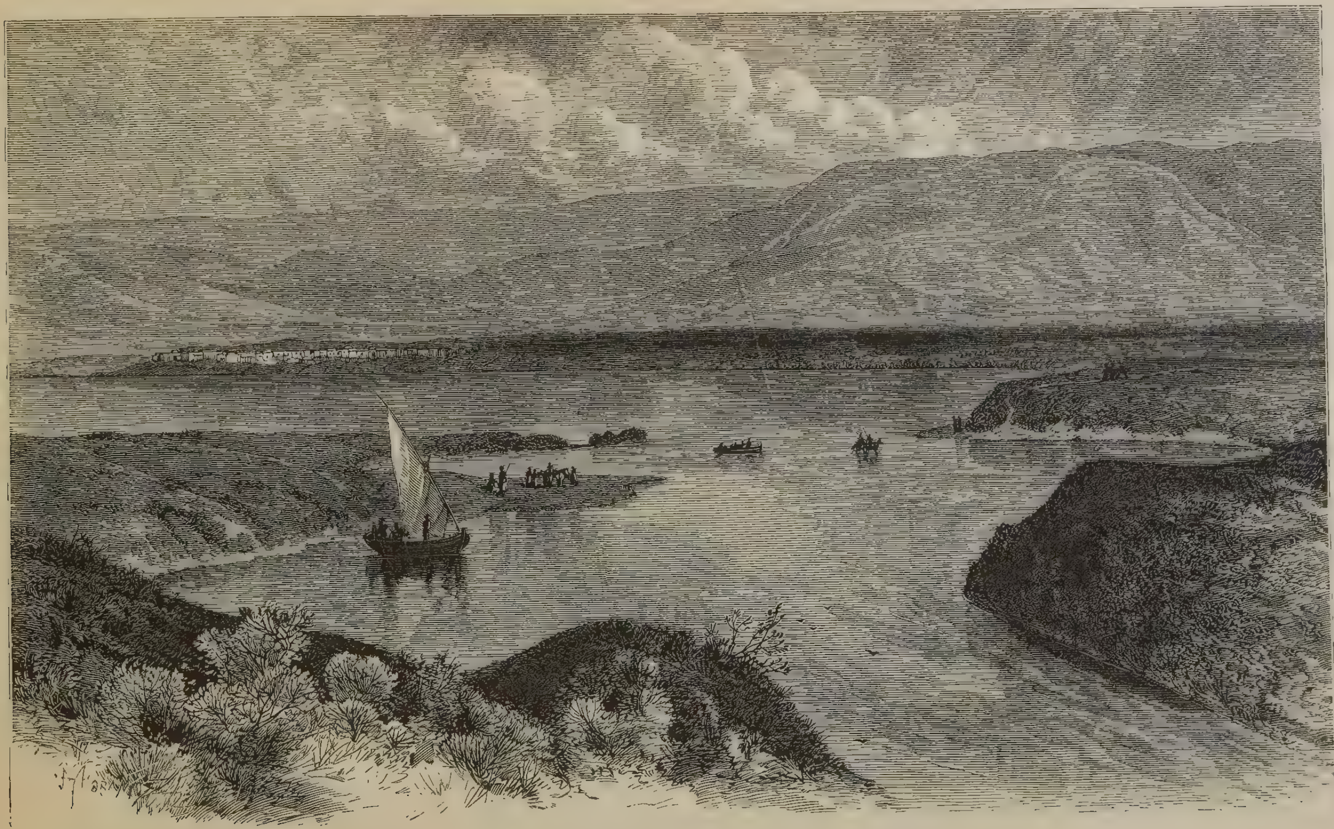
Beyond those nearest hills on our left is a deep wady, called Fadjâs, which runs far up to the north-west. In it is a copious fountain, the water of which was anciently carried along the declivity of the valley in an aqueduct which bent round the end of the ridge northward, and was taken to the old city of Tiberias. You can see the remains of that work here above us, on the side of the mountain. I have not found this curious aqueduct noticed by any traveller, and I myself passed this way without seeing it. The chief design of it, I suppose, was to irrigate the orchards and gardens of Tarichæa, Ammaus, and Tiberias; because the water of Fadjâs is not particularly good to drink, and the inhabitants on this shore desire none better than that of the lake itself.

There are ruins of a building on the hill-side, now called Tâhûn es Sukkar, sugar-mill, and it seems to have been driven by water from the aqueduct. It is not impossible that sugar-cane was once grown in this part of the Jordan valley, as it certainly was about Jericho, and that the canal was made to serve the purpose of irrigating the plantations and of driving the mills to crush the cane. This double use of aqueducts is everywhere made, where the condition of the adjacent land will admit of it.

We have now an easy ride of an hour along the shore to the celebrated hot baths of Tiberias.

There has been a smart shower here, while south of the bridge the ground was baked hard, and the grain drooped sadly.

The same was true on a former occasion, when I came up the Jordan valley. The Ghôr was like a parched desert. There had not been sufficient rain, and "the seed sown had rotted under the clod;" while at Tiberias the whole country was covered with herbs and flowers. And thus it was in former times. The Lord, says Amos, "caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain



OUTGO OF THE JORDAN FROM THE LAKE OF TIBERIAS.

upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered."[1] There are other interesting allusions to matters in agricultural experience in this passage of Amos. "I have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest." This is utterly ruinous to the hopes of the farmer. A little earlier or a little later would not be so fatal, but drought three months before harvest is entirely destructive. In the eighth verse we read, "So two or three cities wandered unto one city, to drink water; but they were not satisfied"—a fact which often has its exemplification complete in Belâd Beshârah, the ancient inheritance of Naphtali.

Here are the far-famed baths. Josephus says they were a little distance from Tiberias, in a village called Ammaus.[2] Ammaus, or Hammath, lay chiefly south of the baths, and its walls can be traced without much difficulty. I am inclined to think that it was the Hammath given to Naphtali. There is a certain similarity in the names; and Ammaus and Hammath are but different modifications of the word from which the name for warm baths is derived. Tiberias itself may occupy the site of Chinneroth, from which the lake took its ancient name, as it now gets that of Tiberias from its successor. I cannot doubt but that there was a city far older and more splendid than that built by Herod. The granite columns mingled amongst the now visible ruins have an antiquity higher than the first century of our era. I suppose the city of Herod occupied the same situation as the present town; for it is plainly implied in many notices by Josephus that it was at some distance from the hot baths, while these ancient remains extend quite down to them. They cannot, therefore, be the ruins of Herod's city, but of one still older.

The water of these springs has a sulphurous and disagreeable smell, and is so bitter and nauseous that it cannot be drank. The baths, however, have a great medicinal reputation, and their sanitary virtues are believed by the ignorant to be almost adequate to remove all the ills to which flesh is heir. The accommodations for bathing are anything but satisfactory, and the entire establishment is filthy in the extreme; and yet it is generally crowded with the lame, the halt, the withered, and the leprous. There is but one common bathing-place, where the water is almost hot enough to cook an egg; and yet "patients" may often be seen in it. How they can endure the water at from one hundred and thirty degrees to one hundred and forty degrees Fahrenheit is a mystery. I once had the bath cleared, and made the experiment, but should have fainted in a short time if I had not quickly made my escape from it.

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[1] Amos iv. 7, 8.

[2] Ant. xviii. 2, 3.

The temperature of the springs, of which there are four, varies in different years, and at different seasons of the same year. According to my thermometer, it ranges from one hundred and thirty-six degrees to one hundred and forty-four degrees Fahrenheit. I was here in 1833, when Ibrahim Pasha was erecting these buildings, and they appeared then quite attractive. The earthquake which destroyed Tiberias in 1837 did no injury to the baths, although the springs were greatly disturbed, and threw out more water than usual, and of a much higher temperature. That disturbance, however, was only temporary; for when I came here, about a month after the earthquake, they had settled down into their ordinary condition.

Are hot springs ever mentioned in the Bible?

These baths are not alluded to either in the Old or the New Testament. There is a curious passage in Gen. xxxvi. 24, which I suspect refers to warm mineral springs and their medicinal virtues. In our translation it reads thus: "This was that Anah that found the mules in the wilderness, as he fed the asses of Zibeon his father." The Hebrew word, translated mules, means waters; and in the Vulgate and Arabic it is rendered warm waters, which Jerome and others amongst the ancients favor, and not a few modern critics agree with them. Of one thing I am well satisfied, that Anah did not find *mules*, whatever may be the true meaning of the word. And since hot springs exist not only here, but in Wady Sherî'at el Manâderah, below Gadara, and at Callirrhoe, east of the Dead Sea, it is quite possible that Moses may have become acquainted with the fact that Anah had first discovered them, or at least had found out their medicinal virtues, and brought them into public notice.

May 17th.

You should have been out with me on the promontory which overhangs the lake, to see the break of day along the eastern mountains. At first it was intensely dark, but by-and-by it began to brighten low down and far to the north. Then suddenly the note of a lark rang out, silvery and joyous, as if from the very midst of the stars. In rapid succession one bird after another rose up, warbling their early matin, until the whole starry vault of heaven was vocal with invisible choristers. One by one the stars faded out before the growing day, and every moment the scene changed from bright to brighter—from glory to glory, dispelling the dark shadows from the eastern cliffs upon the broad surface of Gennesaret. At length the first rays of the rising sun gleamed on the snowy head of Hermon, revealing deep wrinkles, which the storms of many thousand generations have drawn across his stern, cold brow. It was the perfection of beauty; nor can I understand how any one could call the lake, or the scenery around it, tame and featureless.

Doubtless time and season, pleasant company, good health, and cheerful spirits add immensely to the effect of such a scene. In the glare and burning heat of midsummer, a weary traveller, with eyes inflamed, might see nothing to admire. To me this sacred lake, or Sea of Galilee, and its surroundings are ever fair, and always invested with unparalleled interest. Here our blessed Lord dwelt with men, and taught them the way of life. Here he preached in a ship, walked on the waves, slept in the storm, rebuked the winds, and calmed the sea. Here was Magdala, Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida, with its desert place, where five thousand hungry souls were fed with miraculous bread; and Gergesa, where devils went from men to swine, and both together into the sea. Here he opened his mouth, and taught, with authority, that divine sermon on the mount; and on one of those solitary summits Moses and Elias, in shining robes, came down from heaven to converse with him, in the glory of his transfiguration. And from these shores he selected those wonderful men who were to establish his kingdom, and carry his Gospel to the ends of the earth.

John is the only evangelist who mentions Tiberias; and he not only speaks of the city, but calls the lake by that name.[1] May we not find in this an incidental corroboration of the opinion that his gospel was written last of all, and towards the close of the first century, and for those who by that time had come to know the lake most familiarly by the name of Tiberias?

This supposition becomes the more probable when we remember that it was quite a modern town when our Lord frequented this region, having been built about ten years before the beginning of his public ministry by Herod Antipas, and named by him Tiberias, after the Emperor. Josephus found it an important place, and scarcely another town in Galilee is so often mentioned by him. Almost every other city of that province was destroyed by Vespasian and Titus, but this was spared, and rewarded for its adherence to the Romans by being made the capital. John, writing after these events, would naturally mention both the city and the lake, and call the latter by its then most familiar name, Tiberias. The other apostles wrote before these events had taken place, and therefore do not speak of Tiberias at all.

Is it not strange that our Saviour never entered Tiberias?

This is not certain, for he undoubtedly visited places which are not mentioned by any of the evangelists. It is probable, however, that he never came to Tiberias, and for several reasons, which, by the aid of Josephus, we are enabled to discover. He tells us that Herod, in order to people his new city, brought many strangers, and people called Galileans, and many not even freemen, but slaves.[2] In short, Herod gathered up all classes, and compelled them to settle in Tiberias. That was not a population with which our Lord and his disciples would associate. Josephus further states, "that to make this place habitable was to transgress the Jewish ancient laws, because many sepulchres were to be here taken away in order to make room for the city of Tiberias; whereas our law pronounces that such persons are unclean for seven days." Jesus, therefore, could not enter that city without becoming ceremonially unclean, and we know that both he and his disciples avoided any such violation of the law of Moses.

This bit of history taken from Josephus suggests one or two

[1] John vi. 1, 23; xxi. 1.

[2] Ant. xviii. 2, 3.

other remarks. It is certain that Tiberias was built, in part at least, upon the cemetery of a city then in ruins, for without such a city whence came the "many sepulchres" spoken of? That it was ancient and deserted before Tiberias was built, is evident from the fact that those sepulchres had no owners to be outraged by their demolition. The remark of Josephus about the sepulchres also shows that the modern town occupies the site of Herod's city. The face of the hill on which the northern part of it now stands is covered with peculiar, and apparently old, tombs. Many of them were destroyed when the present wall was built, for they extended under it, and into the city itself, and the hill-side to the north and north-west is crowded with the graves of a former city. What was the name of that more ancient city must ever remain a matter of mere conjecture.

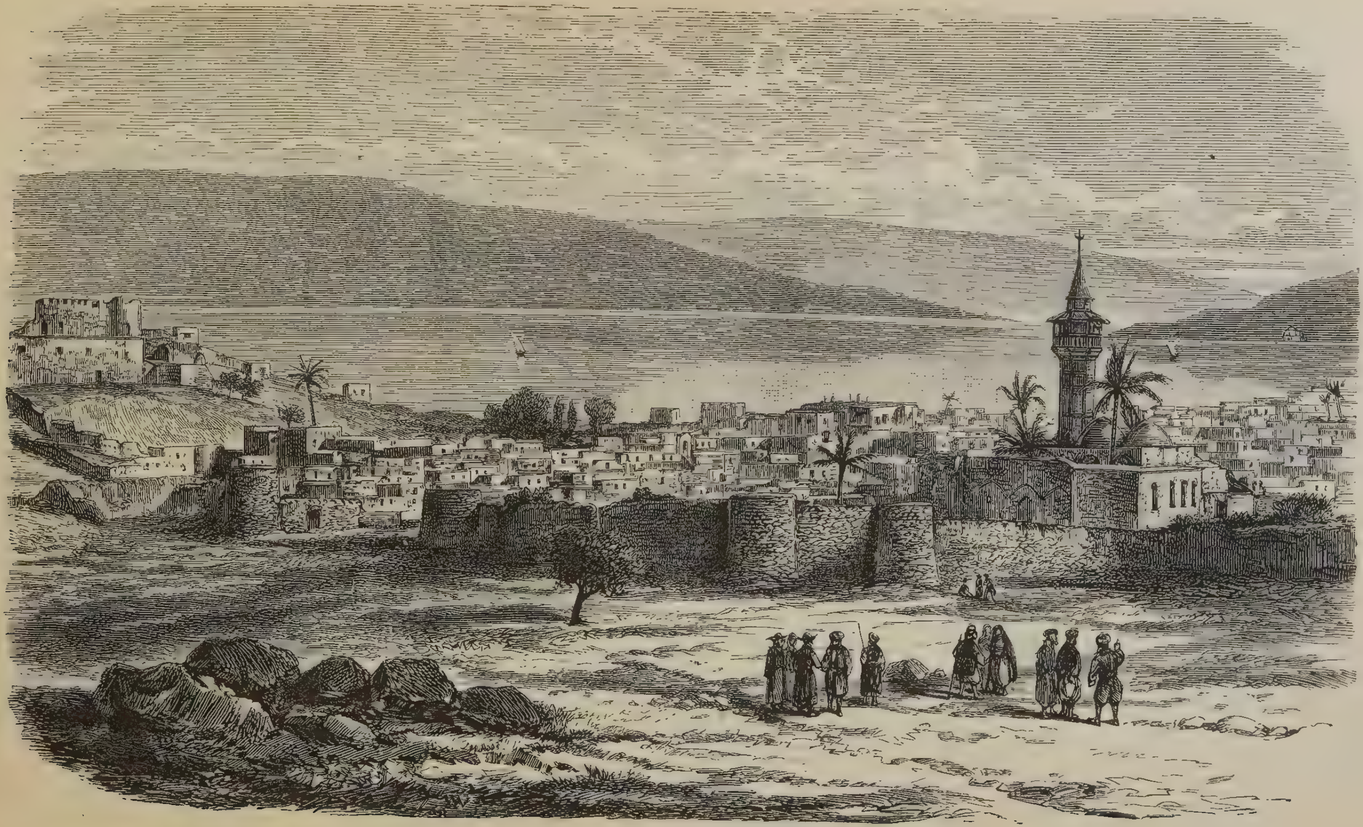
We may also determine with certainty that the former city was south of the present one, for there is no place for it on the north, or in any other direction but south. This confirms the idea that the ruins between Tiberias and the baths are the remains of a city more ancient than that built by Herod. It may have been larger than the modern town, for it covered the plain and side of the mountain down to the baths, and was adorned with public edifices, as the remains now show. Perhaps it was Hammath, named from the hot baths, owing to their celebrity in olden time. Perhaps it was Chinnereth, from which the lake took its most ancient name, "the Sea of Chinnereth," as it has derived its modern one, "the Sea of Tiberias," from its successor. After the destruction of Jerusalem, Tiberias became celebrated in connection with the Jews, and was for a long time the chief seat of rabbinical learning. It is still one of their four holy cities. Amongst Christians it early rose to distinction; and the old church, built upon the traditional spot where our Lord gave his last charge to Peter, is a choice bit of ecclesiastical antiquity.

The modern city is situated on the shore of the lake, at the north-east corner of a small plain. The walls enclose an irregular parallelogram, and were strengthened by ten round towers on the west, five on the north, and eight on the south. There were also two or three towers along the shore, to protect the city from an attack by water. Not much more than one-half of this area is now occupied by buildings of any kind; and there is nothing at the north end, which is a rocky hill, but the ruins of the old castle. The earthquake of 1837 prostrated a large part of the walls, and they have not yet been repaired.

There is no town in Syria so filthy as Tiberias, or so little to be desired for a residence. Being several hundred feet below the level of the sea, and overhung on the west by a high mountain, which shuts off the Mediterranean breezes, it is intensely hot in summer. The last time I was encamped near the Baths, the thermometer stood at one hundred degrees about midnight. Tiberias also swarms with vermin. What can induce human beings to live in such a place? And yet some two thousand five hundred of our race make it their chosen abode. They are chiefly Jews, attracted hither either to cure their bodies in her baths, or to purify their spirits by contact with her traditionary and ceremonial holiness.

The lake itself is too well known to need much description. It is of an irregular oval or pear shape, with the large end to the north, and not more than twelve miles long, and six wide from el Mejdel to Wady es Semak. It is six hundred and eighty-two feet below the Mediterranean, and this great depression accounts for some of its remarkable phenomena. Seen from any point of the surrounding heights, it is a fine sheet of water, set in a frame-work of rounded hills and rugged mountains, which rise and roll upward to where snowy Hermon towers against the blue vault of heaven.

The profound basin of the lake probably owes its origin to volcanic agency at some remote epoch in geological chronology; but perhaps no part of it was an active crater, though it is surrounded by extinct volcanoes and vast regions of trap-rock. The lake is fed mainly by the Jordan; but the fountains of 'Ain el Fûlîyeh, 'Ain el Mudauwarah, 'Ain et Tîny, and 'Ain et Tâbighah, and in winter the streams from Wady el Hamâm, er Rŭbŭdîyeh, el 'Amûd, and el Leimûn, from the west and north-west, and Sulam, Tell'aiyeh, Jermaiah, Shŭkaiyif, and es Semak, on the east, pour a large amount of water into the lake, and, during the rainy season, raise its level several feet above the present mark. The effect is seen particularly along the southern end, and at the outgo of the Jor-



TŬBARÎYEH—TIBERIAS.

dan. The water of the lake is sweet and wholesome, and the fish abundant and of a good quality. They are, however, but little troubled either by hook, net, or spear.

That reminds me that I have missed two pictures with which this most Biblical of lakes has ever been associated—the little ships and the fishermen.

The absence of the former is easily explained, for the present inhabitants of this region, and the semi-savage Arabs who now frequent this shore have no occasion for "ships." The Bedawîn and the fellâhîn, or peasants, have an invincible repugnance to the sea, nor can they be tempted to trust themselves upon its treacherous surface. Some of their proverbs are intended to express this aversion. If the lake was covered with boats, they would travel all round its shores on the slow-paced camel rather than sail directly across to the city.

As there is no demand for boats, the very art of building them is lost. You could not find a carpenter on this whole coast who has either the materials, the tools, or the skill to construct one, or even to mend it if broken. They have no more use for boats than for well-made roads; both disappeared together when the Arabians conquered the country, and both will reappear together as soon as a more civilized race rises to power. Two or three boats, constructed in Haifa or Acre, are occasionally seen on the lake. When I was here last, one of them was high and dry on the sand, near the entrance of the Jordan into the lake, with no prospect that it would ever again be launched.

The cause for the absence of fishermen is likewise found in the character and habits of the natives and of the Bedawîn. You could never persuade a genuine son of the desert to sit or stand all day, holding a rod over the water with a string and hook at the end of it. If you put it into his hands all ready baited, you would soon see him fling the whole tackle into the lake. A few of the inhabitants of the city of Tiberias have learned the fisherman's art, but even they have no enthusiasm for it.

How do you account for the fact that so many of the apostles were chosen from the class of fishermen? It could not have been accidental.

Nothing in the kingdom of Christ is accidental or the result of caprice, least of all the vital matter of choosing its first teachers and founders. "Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men."[1] There was, no doubt, an adaptation, a fitness in the occupation of those men to develop just those attributes of character most needed in the apostolic office. There are various modes of fishing, and each was calculated to cultivate and strengthen some particular moral quality of great importance in their mission. Thus angling requires patience, great perseverance, and caution. And the fisherman must not put himself forward; he should not be seen.

Then there is fishing with the hand-net. It is seen to best advantage along the coast from Beirût to Sidon and Tyre. The net is in shape like the top of a tent, with a long cord fastened to the apex. This is tied to the hand, and the net so disposed over the arm that, when thrown, it expands to its utmost circumference, around which are strung beads of lead to make it drop suddenly to the bottom. The fisherman, half bent, and more than half naked, keenly watches the playful surf, and there spies his game tumbling in carelessly towards him. Forward he leaps to meet it. Away goes the net, expanding as it flies, and its leaded circumference sinks to the bottom ere the fish are aware that its meshes have closed around them. By the aid of the cord the fisherman leisurely draws up the net, and secures the fish. All this requires a keen eye and an active frame. He, too, must be patient, watchful, and prompt to cast his net at the proper moment.

Then there is the great drag-net, the working of which teaches the value of united effort. Some must row the boat, some cast out the net; some on the shore pull the rope with all their strength; others throw stones and beat the water, to prevent the fish from escaping; and as it approaches the shore, every one is active in holding up the edges, drawing it to land, and seizing the fish. This is that net which gathers "of every kind," and, when drawn to the shore, the fishermen sit down and collect "the good into vessels, but cast the bad away."[2] I have watched this operation throughout a hundred times along the shore of the Mediterranean.

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[1] Mark i. 17.

[2] Matt. xiii. 47, 48.

Again, there is the bag-net, so constructed as to enclose the fish out in deep water, and is then drawn up into the boat. It was with one of this kind, I suppose, that Simon Peter had toiled all night without catching anything, but which, when let down at the command of Jesus, "inclosed a great multitude of fishes, and their net brake, and they filled both the ships, so that they began to sink."[1] Peter speaks of toiling all night, and certain kinds of fishing are carried on at night. It is a beautiful sight. With blazing torch the boat glides over the flashing sea, and the men stand gazing keenly into it until their prey is sighted, when, quick as thought, they fling their net or fly their spear; and often you see the tired fishermen come sullenly into harbor in the morning, having toiled all night in vain. Indeed, every kind of fishing is uncertain. A dozen times the angler jerks out a bare hook; the hand-net closes down on nothing; the drag-net brings in only weeds; the bag-net comes up empty. And then, again, every throw is successful—every net is full; and frequently without any other apparent reason than that of throwing it on the right side of the ship instead of the left, as it happened to the disciples here on the Lake of Tiberias.[2]

It is unnecessary to apply the fisherman's art to illustrate further the noble occupation of fishing for men in the great seas of sin. We may leave that to the commentator and the preacher. No one occupation of humble life, not even that of the shepherd, calls into exercise and develops so many of the elements necessary for the office of a religious teacher as this of fishing.

Are we to understand from John xxi. 7, that Peter was actually naked?

Not necessarily so. Here in this hot climate, however, it is common, when fishing, to have only a mahzâm, or towel, round the waist. The fisher's coat which he girt about him was probably the short 'abâyeh now worn, and which is often laid aside. Open in front, it can be doffed and donned in a moment. When worn, it is girt about the loins with the zunnâr, or girdle; and Peter did this when hastening to meet the Lord.

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[1] Luke v. 4–9.

[2] John xxi. 6.

X.

TIBERIAS.

Excursion to the Eastern Shore of the Lake.—Native Boat.—Storms on the Lake in the Time of Christ and at the Present Day.—"Ships."—Wady es Semak.—Castle of Baldwin.—Gersa, Gergesa.—Gadara not Gergesa.—Country of the Gadarenes.—The Demoniacs and the Herd of Swine.—Wild-boars.—Raising Swine.—Dangers of Boar-hunting.—Biblical Allusions to Swine.—Jesus in the Coasts of Decapolis.—"The Ten Cities."—Geological Characteristics of the Region east of the Lake.—The Jaulân.—Bedawîn Robbers.—Covenant of "Brotherhood," and of "Bread and Salt."—Salt that has "lost his Savour."—Native Dealer in Salt.—Salt Marshes near Larnaca, and Salt Lake at Jebbûl.—Rock-salt on the Shore of the Dead Sea.—The Profession of Robber.—Character of the Bedawîn.—Gamala.—Account of the Siege and Capture of Gamala by Josephus.—Description of the Site and Ruins of Gamala.—Wind-storms.—Predictions concerning the Destruction of the Jews.—Belief in the Existence of Hid Treasure.—Fîk, Aphek.—Destruction of Benhadad's Army.—Argob.—Kefr Hârib.—Khŭrbet es Sŭmrah.—Es Semakh, Hippos.—Pebbly Beach.—The Past, Present, and Future of the Lake.—The Life and Works of Christ associated with the Lake and its Surroundings.—The Apostles chosen from the Craft of Fishermen.—Boat on the Lake.—The Fish of the Lake, and the Miracles of Christ.—Church of St. Peter.—Services in the Church.—Reflections suggested by the Lake and its Shores.—The Natural Basis of the Teachings of Christ.—The Roman Taxgatherer.—"Render unto Cæsar the Things which are Cæsar's."—The Tribute-money.—"A City set on a Hill."—Manners and Customs alluded to by Jesus illustrated by those of the Present Day.—A Jew of the Olden and Modern Time.—Christ the Model Man.—Mercenary Character of Orientals.—Unmercenary Nature of Christ's Kingdom.—Missionary Experience.—Worldliness in Religion.—Dr. Chalmers.—Christ's Kingdom not Temporal.—Perversion of Religion for Temporal Advantage.—Protection of Religious Sects by European Nations.—The Hebrew Commonwealth.—The Divine Kingdom of Truth.—Disregard of Truth by Orientals.—Isaiah's Reference to the Ox and the Ass.—The Donkey.—Swarm of Gnats.—Biblical Allusions to Gnats and Fleas.—The Arabs and the Fleas.—The Centipede.

May 17th.

THE disposal of our time so as to give us Saturday for a sail on this most Biblical of lakes is especially gratifying.

We have the promise of a day altogether favorable for our purpose. There is a light breeze from the south, which will waft us gently over to the eastern shore at Wady es Semak, where there are sites and scenes well worth a visit. I have engaged the only available boat now here, and directed the owner to hire two men to accompany us, that if the breeze should die away they may row us back. We shall need the entire day, and will therefore start at once.

This is certainly a clumsy craft; but it is wide and heavy, and will not be easily upset by any sudden squall that may strike us.

It has been constructed to outlive and escape from such a catastrophe, and with good reason. Placid as the surface of the lake is now, squalls, and even furious tempests, are not uncommon at certain seasons of the year. "There arose a great storm" at the time when Jesus and his disciples sailed over it, as we learn from the narrative in Mark, and also from the account of the return of the apostles to Capernaum during the night after the feeding of the five thousand in "a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida."[1]

I spent a night on the mountains east of the lake, at the head of Wady Shŭkaiyif. The sun had scarcely set when the wind began to blow towards the lake, and it continued all night long with constantly increasing violence; so that when we descended to the shore the next morning the surface of the lake was like that of a boiling caldron. The wind swept down every wady from the northeast and east with such fury that no efforts of rowers could have brought a boat to land at any point along that coast. Caught by a wind like that, the disciples must have been driven quite across to Gennesaret, as we know they were. To understand the causes of these sudden and violent tempests, we must remember that the lake lies low—six hundred and eighty feet below the sea; that the mountainous plateau of the Jaulân rises to a considerable height, spreading backward to the wilds of the Haurân, and upward to snowy Hermon; that the watercourses have worn or washed out profound ravines and wild gorges, converging to the head of this lake; and that these act like great funnels, to draw down the cold winds from the mountains.

[1] Matt. xiv. 13–33; Mark iv. 35–41; Luke ix. 10–17; John vi. 1–21.

We pitched our tents on the shore, and remained for three days and nights exposed to that vehement wind. We had to double-pin the tent-ropes, and frequently were obliged to hang with our whole weight upon them to keep the quivering tabernacle from being carried up bodily into the air. The whole lake was lashed into fury; the waves repeatedly rolled up to our tent-door, tumbling over the ropes with such violence as to carry away the tent-pins. It was no matter of wonder to me, therefore, that the disciples toiled and rowed hard all that night "over the sea toward Capernaum;" and how natural their amazement and terror at the sight of Jesus walking on the waves! The faith of Peter in desiring and daring to set foot on such a tempestuous sea is most striking and impressive—more so, indeed, than the failure of it after he had made the attempt, and cried out, "Lord, save me!"

Such winds are not only violent, but they come down suddenly, and often when the sky is perfectly clear. I once went in to swim near the hot baths; and, before I was aware, a wind came rushing over the cliffs with such force that it was with difficulty I could regain the shore. Some such sudden and "great storm of wind" it was, I suppose, that overwhelmed the ship with waves "so that it was now full," while Jesus "was asleep on a pillow in the hinder part of the ship;" nor is it strange that the disciples aroused him with the cry of "Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"[1]

The distance from Tiberias to the mouth of Wady es Semak is not more than eight miles; and, with the help of the freshening breeze, our boat will soon reach the eastern shore of the lake.

I suppose the "ships" so often mentioned in the gospel narratives were not much larger than this boat in which we are now sailing. They were evidently so small as to lie close to the shore, could easily be boarded from it, and kept very near it; for when Jesus entered into the ship of Simon, he "prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people out of the ship." Nothing much larger than a boat could be thus handled.

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[1] Matt. viii. 23–27; Mark iv. 38–41; Luke viii. 22–26.

That those so-called ships were merely boats, is also clearly implied from the fact that when, after the discourse of our Lord, and at his request, Simon launched "out into the deep and let down" the net, "they enclosed a multitude of fishes: and their net brake;" and not only his own ship was filled with the fish, but that also of "their partners, so that they began to sink."[1] That could only have happened to boats of no great size.

But here we are at Wady es Semak; and the owner of our boat says he can safely run it onto the sandy beach, so that we may easily step from the bow to the shore. After landing, I will direct the boatmen to pass southward, and wait for us opposite that lofty promontory which was once crowned by the castle of Gamala, so famous during the wars of the Jews.

Somewhere in the immediate neighborhood of this Wady es Semak, I suppose, Jesus landed when he "came over unto the other side of the sea."

A few miles up the valley are the broken walls of Kŭsr Bardawîl, the castle of Baldwin, that celebrated Crusader, as it is called by the Arabs. We have no time to visit that place at present, nor is there anything there or in Wady es Semak to claim our special attention. On the south bank of that wady, however, and near the shore of the lake, is the site of a ruined town, in which I was greatly interested when I first discovered it, after a long ride from Bâniâs over the mountainous region east of the lake. By a steep descent from the lofty plateau of the Jaulân I came down to the shore at that place, and my Bedawîn guide told me that the name of that prostrate town was Gersa. As the main object for which we have come to this part of the lake is to visit that site, we will proceed to it at once.

It was a small place, as you see; but the walls can be traced all round, and the suburbs seem to have been considerable. I identify these ruins with the site of Gergesa, where our Lord healed the two men possessed with devils, and suffered those malignant spirits to enter into the herd of swine. From Origen down to the last critic who has tried his skill upon the Greek text of the New Testament, the conflicting and contradictory readings of manuscripts in regard to the place where the miracle was performed have furnished a fruitful source of discussion. Matthew locates it in the country of the Gergesenes, Mark and Luke in the country of the Gadarenes.[1] The Vulgate, and others that follow it, read Gergesenes; nor are these all the discrepancies in regard to the name of that place.

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[1] Luke v. 1–11.

It is certain, from all the accounts we have of the miracle, that it could not have occurred at Gadara, but at some place near the shore of the lake. Mark says that "when he [Christ] was come out of the ship, immediately there met him a man," etc. With this statement the tenor of all the narratives coincides, and therefore we must find a locality not far from the shore. All the accounts imply that the city itself, as well as the country of the Gergesenes, was near the shore of the lake, and that there was a steep mountain so close at hand that the herd of swine, rushing down it, were precipitated into the lake. Now, Gadara does not meet any one of these necessary conditions.

Um Keîs marks the site of Gadara, and it is about three hours distant from the extreme south shore of the lake. There is first a steep descent of an hour to the Jarmuk; then down the gorge of that river for an hour; and then another hour over the plain to the south shore of the lake. No one, I think, will maintain that this meets the requirements of the sacred narratives, but is in contradiction to them. If the miracle was performed at Gadara, then the swine must have run down the mountain for an hour, forded the deep Jarmuk, descended its northern bank, and raced across a level plain several miles before they could reach the nearest margin of the lake—a feat which no herd of swine would be likely to achieve, even though they were "possessed." The site of the miracle, therefore, was not at Gadara. Nor was it in the country of the Gadarenes, because that country lay south of the river Jarmuk; and besides, if the territory of the city did at any time reach to the south end of the lake, there is no mountain there above it adapted to the conditions of the miracle.

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[1] Matt. viii. 28; Mark v. 1; Luke viii. 26.

The city near where the miracle was wrought was, therefore, close to the shore, and there we should find it. In Gersa we have a position which fulfils the requirements of the narratives, and with a name so near that in Matthew as to be in itself a strong corroboration of the identification. The site is within a few rods of the shore, and a mountain rises directly above it, in which are ancient tombs: out of some one of them the man possessed of the devils may have issued to meet Jesus. The lake is so near the base of the mountain that a herd of swine feeding above it, seized with a sudden panic, would rush madly down the declivity, those behind tumbling over and thrusting forwards those before, and, as there is no space to recover on the narrow plain between the base of the mountain and the lake, they would crowd headlong into the water and perish.

All is perfectly natural just at Gersa, and here, I suppose, the miracle did actually occur. Farther south the plain becomes so broad that the herd might have stopped and recoiled from the lake, whose domain they would not willingly invade. This place is, also, one which our Lord would be likely to visit, having Capernaum in full view to the north, and Galilee "over against it," as Luke says it was. Studying the details of that miracle during a tour round the eastern shore of the lake, I was obliged to modify the impressions which had grown up with me from childhood. There is no bold cliff overhanging the lake, and everywhere along that shore a smooth beach declines gently down to the water.

And now, by way of a relief, let me call your attention to the fact that this Wady es Semak is everywhere ploughed up by wildboars in search of the esculent roots upon which they live at this season of the year. Whether there is any lineal connection between them and the herd that was feeding on this mountain, I leave you and every one else to decide. It is a fact, however, that these creatures abound at this place, and in a state as wild and fierce as though they were still "possessed."

Amongst the few Arabic words which frequent and most emphatic repetition has fastened in my memory, is khanzîr, hog; and from the way it is used and resented, I judge it is an epithet more opprobrious in Arabic than in English.

More so, perhaps, since the animal itself is generally held to be unclean, and to defile all those who have anything to do with it. The Hebrew name is the same as the Arabic, and the most scrupulous Jew did not hold the khanzîr in greater abomination than do the disciples of Muhammed.

Since hogs are now and always have been thus regarded in this region, how do you account for the "herd of many swine" at the time of our Lord's visit to Gergesa?

It can be proved from Assyrian and Persian monuments that swine's flesh was not rejected even by many Oriental nations. Now this whole region was for several centuries subject to the Greeks and Romans, and the rearing of swine, therefore, had become a well-known occupation. This is implied in the parable of the Prodigal Son, and also in the Sermon on the Mount; for the Great Teacher would not have familiarly referred to swine and their habits if they had not been well known to his audience.[1] We may be quite certain that even the great number in this herd was not regarded as incredible, or even extraordinary, else some note of that fact would appear in the narrative. It is well to remember in this connection that Gergesa was nearly surrounded by the Græco-Roman cities of the Decapolis, which were then crowded with a population who not only used swine's flesh as an article of food, but offered it in sacrifice to their gods.

Have you ever come upon the wild swine which you say now infest the region where the miracle was performed?

The Arab proverb, "Abkar min el khanzîr"—earlier awake than the swine—intimates that they feed only in the night. During the day they lie hid in inaccessible swamps, such as those around the Hûleh; or in thorny thickets and impracticable ravines, far from frequented roads and human habitations, and those who seek them must follow them to their chosen haunts. I have repeatedly seen the surface in large forests entirely rooted up by these night foragers; but as we travel with tinkling bells and noisy muleteers, we are not likely to get a sight of wild-boars. They are hunted by the fellâhîn of this region, and I have frequently heard the crack of their guns in the cornfields below Bâniâs.

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[1] Luke xv. 15, 16; Matt. vii. 6.

Wild hogs are fond of the maize which is largely grown in the Hûleh. They come up in droves about midnight out of the marsh round the head of that lake, and, if not prevented, destroy far more than they devour. The watchmen mark the part to which those robbers resort, and arrange to attack them. With guns heavily loaded, they cautiously take their stations, and patiently await the coming herd. Then, after a simultaneous discharge of their guns, in rush the hardy hunters, and a general mêlée with dogs, spears, daggers, and pistols, and infinite uproar follows.

But this "sport" is often attended with no little danger. A wounded boar, as even royal hunters attest, is a formidable antagonist, and fierce encounters in the dark are described in after-years, with many additions and startling episodes to enliven the natûr's watch around his midnight fire. I have heard of tragedies of another kind growing out of these night hunts. A young Protestant of Khureibeh, below Hâsbeiya, mistaking his companion for a boar bursting through the jungle, shot him dead, and was himself long imprisoned in Damascus under suspicion, entirely groundless, that he did the deed intentionally.

There are some Biblical allusions to swine which have not been noticed yet. The Psalmist complains that "the boar out of the wood doth waste" the goodly vine which Jehovah had brought out of Egypt. Is the wild hog especially fond of grapes?

He is; and makes sad havoc of vineyards planted at a distance from the villages, and this in spite of the watchmen appointed to guard them. So also "the wild beast of the field doth devour" the vineyards; beasts of various kinds—foxes, jackals, and bears.[1]

Do you suppose that "pearls" are mentioned in our Lord's admonition, "Neither cast ye your pearls before swine," because there is a certain resemblance between them and the corn or other food ordinarily given to swine?[2]

There is no other ornament of value in this country which bears sufficient likeness to their food to deceive even stupid swine; but small pearls would readily tempt them to make a trial of their quality—an experiment likely enough to provoke them to "turn again and rend" the foolish giver.

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[1] Psa. lxxx. 13.

[2] Matt. vii. 6.

Peter says, "the sow that was washed [returns] to her wallowing in the mire."[1] Do you understand the allusion to washing as a mere verbal addition to give point to the comparison?

By no means. Peter says the proverb is true, and I doubt not the washing was also true. The inhabitants of this warm country well know the benefit arising from the constant washing of those sheep which they are fattening for winter food; and certainly the flesh of swine would be equally improved by frequent ablutions. At present we do not witness this, for the people do not raise hogs. We may be quite sure, however, that swine washed in the purest of fountains would turn again to their wallowing in the first mud-hole they could find, with all the eagerness of their swinish instincts.

Did our Lord ever pass through this region east of the lake and the Jordan?

Through parts of it, certainly. Under the comprehensive name of Decapolis it is repeatedly mentioned in the Gospel narratives. In Mark v. 20, we read that the man who had been delivered from the legion of evil spirits at Gergesa "departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him;" and from chapter vii. 31, it appears that Jesus made an extensive tour through this region, coming back to Galilee "through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis." We also learn from Matthew xix. 1, and Mark x. 1, that Jesus occasionally retired to places east of the Jordan, either to rest or to escape the machinations of the Jews.

Did Gergesa belong to "the coasts of Decapolis?"

It was not one of "the ten cities," but Gadara was. Pompey the Great had rebuilt Gadara, and enlarged its territory, not long before the birth of Jesus, and at the time of the miracle it was the capital of one of the "five conventions" into which, Josephus tells us, Gabinius divided the whole Jewish nation.[2]

What were the names of those "ten cities" which together constituted the Decapolis, and where were they situated?

Ancient authors are not entirely agreed in their lists. Scythopolis, Beisân, was the only one west of the Jordan; all the rest were east of it, and of the Lake of Tiberias: Pella, Tŭbŭkat Fahl; Gadara, Um Keîs; Hippos, not far from the outgo of the Jordan;

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[1] 2 Peter ii. 22.

[2] B. J. i. viii. 5.

Philadelphia, Rabboth Ammon, or 'Ammân; Gerasa, Jerash; Dion, site unknown; Canatha, Kunawât; Damascus and Abila. One or two other names, as Raphana and Capitolias, er Râs, are mentioned by some writers as belonging to this confederacy, but their title to membership is disputed.

From Wady es Semak southward to the base of the lofty promontory of Gamala, to which we shall now proceed, is about half an hour's easy walk along the margin of the lake, and there we are to find our boat. Once a well-made road passed up from the southern end of the lake to Gersa, and from there it appears to have ascended to the wild mountainous district of the Jaulân, the ancient Gaulanitis.

These cliffs on our left furnish an excellent opportunity to observe some of the geological characteristics of the country east of the lake.

The lower strata are limestone, but all above is basaltic; and this formation is of great thickness. Descending through Wady Shŭkaiyif from the plateau of the Jaulân, I found the basaltic formation to be fully two thousand feet thick before it gives place to calcareous rock. The immense volcanic bed, overspreading the entire Jaulân, consists everywhere of irregular heaps of amorphous lava and disintegrating scoriæ, with large mounds of globular basalt; but I saw no columnar basalt in the Jaulân. Were it not for the numerous springs of water in the southern part, that whole province would be a black and barren wilderness, incapable of sustaining even the goats which now rejoice in its wild ravines.

The south-eastern shore of the lake is the most dangerous part of this region to traverse. When passing this way from Bâniâs, I took the precaution to get a letter from Sheikh Fereij, one of the feudal rulers of the Jaulân, to Sheikh Mahmûd, then at the head of a large tribe encamped a little south of Kŭl'at el Hŭsn. With that, and three of his horsemen as guides and guards, we passed safely; but it was well we had them, for just as we entered Wady es Semak we were suddenly confronted by a troop of Bedawîn robbers on their fleet horses, and armed with their long spears. Our guard galloped up to them, and explained that we were under the protection of Sheikh Fereij, and must be allowed to pass. They looked viciously at the loaded mules, but did not dare to lay hands on anything belonging to our party. They acknowledged that they had come up from the Ghôr, the valley of the Jordan, on an expedition for plunder, and when leaving us said they intended to visit the plain of el Batîhah that night.

Alas for the poor peasants! Such visits, constantly repeated, desolate the country, and drive the farmers farther and farther westward, to find a place where these lawless villains dare not follow them. When the Bedawîn make a raid upon a village, they compel the people to feed both themselves and their horses, and in the morning march off with every valuable article they can find. Here is the true explanation of the wide-spread desolations of this beautiful land; and, unless some government stronger than the Turkish shall come in to repress these robbers, the farmers will be driven towards the seaboard, until the interior is abandoned, and changed into a frightful desert. The marauding party that met us belonged to a tribe called ed Diab, which, interpreted, means "the Wolves"—a most significant and appropriate name.

One of the "princes of the Midianites," whom the men of Ephraim slew at the wine-press of its owner, and whose head they brought to Gideon, was called Zeeb—wolf.[1] Were not those modern Midianites his lineal descendants?

Probably not, though they occupy much the same region, and resemble those ancient robbers in many respects. I visited their camp; and, after reading my letter, and making some private inquiries of the guard, the sheikh was very gracious, though the reception at first was austere enough, and somewhat alarming. He urged me to spend the night with him; but, finding me resolved to pass on, he rose, saying that I must not go until he returned. After some time he came out of the harêm, or that part of the tent occupied by the women, with some fresh-baked bread and a dish of dibs—grape molasses; and, taking his seat by my side, he broke off a bit of bread, dipped it in the dibs, and eat it himself; then he gave a bit to me to eat; and in like manner he required all my companions to partake, and even had the muleteers called in to eat of the bread and dibs. After that, all those about the tent tasted of it.

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[1] Judges vii. 24, 25.

This was the ceremony, and he explained its significance somewhat in this fashion: "We are now brethren. There is bread and salt between us; we are brothers and allies. You are at liberty to travel amongst us wherever you please; and, so far as my power extends, I am to aid, befriend, and succor you, even to the loss of my life." The eating of this bread was the sign and seal of the covenant of Brotherhood—Khûweh, as they term it; and they affirm that "the bread and salt will never leave the heart of a true and loyal Bedawîn;" and of course the covenant of which it is the symbol cannot be forgotten or renounced.

The enemies of Ezra sought to veil their envy and hatred of the Jews by pretending that they were under obligations to see that the king received no dishoner, because they had "maintenance from the king's palace," or, as it is in the margin, were "salted with the salt of the palace."[1] The covenant of bread and salt is well understood over large sections of this country, nor is it confined to the Bedawîn Arabs. The native Christian upbraids the civilized Frank because he acknowledges no such covenant of brotherhood, and I have often heard it bluntly and bitterly asserted that we have no "bread and salt."

I want to make an inquiry which the Bedawîn ideas about bread and salt suggested. Our Lord, in the Sermon on the Mount, says: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men."[2] To what fact in experience does he allude?

It is plainly implied that salt, under certain conditions so generally known as to permit him to found his instruction upon them, did actually lose its saltness. I have often seen just such salt, and the identical disposition of it that our Lord has mentioned. A merchant of Sidon, having farmed of the government the revenue from the importation of salt, brought over a great quantity from the marshes of Cyprus—enough, in fact, to supply the whole province for many years. This he had transferred to the mountains, to cheat the government out of some small percentage of duty. Sixty-five houses in Jûne, the village once occupied by Lady Hester Stanhope, were rented and filled with salt. Such houses have merely earthen floors, and the salt next the ground was in a few years entirely spoiled. I saw large quantities of it literally thrown into the road, to be trodden under foot of men and beasts. It was "good for nothing." Similar magazines are common, and have been from remote ages, as we learn from history, both sacred and profane; and the sweeping out of the spoiled salt, and casting it into the street, are actions familiar to all in the land.

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[1] Ezra iv. 14.

[2] Matt. v. 13.

It should be stated in that connection that the salt used in this country is not manufactured by boiling clean salt water, nor taken from mines, but is obtained from marshes along the sea-shore, as in Cyprus, or from salt lakes in the interior, which dry up in summer, as the one in the desert north of Palmyra, and the great lake of Jebbûl, south-east of Aleppo. The salt of our Sidon merchant was from the extensive marshes near Larnaca. I have seen those marshes covered with a thick crust of salt, and have also visited them when it had been gathered into heaps, like hay-cocks in a meadow. The large winter lake south-east of Aleppo I found dried up by the last of August; and the entire basin, farther than the eye could reach, was white as snow with an incrustation of coarse salt. Hundreds of people were out gathering and carrying it to Jebbûl, where the government stores were kept.

Maundrell, who visited the lake at Jebbûl, tells us that he found salt there which had entirely "lost his savour," and the same abounds amongst the débris at Usdum, and in other localities of rock-salt at the south end of the Dead Sea. Indeed, it is a well-known fact that the salt of this country, if left long in contact with the ground, does become insipid and useless. From the manner in which it is gathered, much earth and other impurities are necessarily collected with it. Not a little of it is so impure that it cannot be used at all, and such salt soon effloresces and turns to dust—not to fruitful soil, however. It is not only "good for nothing" itself, but it actually destroys all fertility wherever it is thrown; and this is the reason why it is cast into the street. There is a sort of verbal verisimilitude in the manner in which our Lord alludes to the act: it is "cast out, and trodden under foot;" so troublesome is this corrupted salt, that it is carefully swept up, carried forth, and thrown into the street. There is no place about the house, yard, or garden where it can be tolerated. No man will allow it to be thrown on to his field, and the only place for it is the street, and there it is cast to be "trodden under foot of men."

But we must return to the tent of our new brother Mahmûd. After "eating the bread and salt," we rose to depart. The sheikh accompanied us down to the road, and bid us "farewell" in a courteous and somewhat ceremonious manner, and sent two of his followers to guide us on our way, as he said, but in reality to guard us from some stray "brother," who might not be disposed to acknowledge the claims of our extemporaneous relationship. One of those horsemen was very communicative, and stated that he wanted to have accompanied the marauding expedition which we encountered in the morning, but his sheikh would not permit him to go. "Well," said I, "if you had met me, would you have assisted to plunder me?" "Certainly; you would not have been my brother then, nor protected by Sheikh Fareij." Strange customs, and singular people! It was something novel to be riding along this solitary shore with your brother, a professed robber.

My talkative "brother" gloried in the title of robber; and when I asked him why they did not cultivate the rich valley of the Jordan, he curled his lip in disdain, and exclaimed, "What! a Bedawy drive the plough? *Istugfar Allah*—God forbid! We are robbers. That is our trade, and by it we will live, or W'Allah! by this we will die," striking his long spear fiercely into the ground. This fellow, as usual, was not satisfied with his present; and when I told him he might take or leave it, just as he pleased, he went away muttering that we should meet him again in Wady Mandhûr, "and then," said he, "In sha Allah, please God, I will take whatever I want." We remained encamped on the shore of the lake at Samakh three days, and he watched us like a lynx, and if we had entered Wady Mandhûr he might have attempted to make his threat good, notwithstanding the covenant of brotherhood between us.

I am amazed to find highly-cultivated gentlemen the defenders and eulogists of the Bedawîn. Burckhardt was a learned man, and an unsophisticated, straightforward writer, and yet he seems to have been favorably impressed with the character and customs of the Bedawîn Arabs. But, according to his own account, they are a nation of liars, thieves, and robbers, with all the vices which attend such a course of life. They are also cowardly and mean. Rarely, indeed, will they venture to attack even an inferior party, if armed and prepared to resist; but wherever and whenever they overtake a defenceless stranger, they pounce upon him like hungry wolves. Even helpless women and children are robbed and stripped without mercy or remorse. True, Burckhardt says that some of them turn their backs while the women are made to strip, and are then so generous as to toss back a few of the rags they do not want.

In accordance with their whole character, they tyrannize over their women, who are, in fact, their slaves, made to do all the degrading and severe drudgery incident to nomadic life. The men lounge idly and lazily about the tent, smoke, drink coffee, and play at games of hazard, of which they have a considerable variety. They are execrably filthy and foul-mouthed, totally uneducated, and supremely proud. Their very virtues are vices, and are contaminated by an odious selfishness. Such even is their one boasted virtue of hospitality. It is a mere social regulation; and without something of the kind these bands of robbers could not carry on their detestable vocation—could not even exist. No civilized government would tolerate them, and this they well know; hence they have an extreme dread of European influence in this country. They do not hesitate to say that, whenever that influence becomes dominant, they must decamp. So it certainly will be, and not till then can this fair and fertile land be regenerated.

Yonder is the hump of the camel which gave the name of Gamala to the famous fortress that was erected upon it. That lofty promontory rises abruptly more than a thousand feet above the lake, and from our present position you can see that it has the form of a recumbent camel very distinctly outlined.

The owner of our boat has come to meet us, with the request that we embark at once, as the morning's breeze is failing, and he fears that they will have a long and weary row back to Tiberias.

This is somewhat disappointing, for the ruins of Gamala are well worth visiting.

On our way back, I will give you an account of the capture of that strongest of Hebrew fortresses, and a description of the existing ruins. It was the last that was sacked by Vespasian and Titus before the siege of Jerusalem, and it has remained to this day just as they left it. Gamala was utterly overthrown, and has not been repaired. The materials never having been wanted for any other place, its ruins encumber the entire surface of the site; and he who would study the architecture and mode of fortification at the time of Christ should visit Kul'at el Hŭsn, as Gamala is now called.

Josephus informs us that, even after the taking of Jotapata and all other places in these regions, the people of Gamala refused to surrender to the Romans. "They relied upon the difficulty of the place, which was greater than that of Jotapata, for it was situated upon a rough ridge of a high mountain, with a kind of neck in the middle. Where it begins to ascend it lengthens itself, and declines as much downward before as behind, insomuch that it is like a camel in figure, from whence it is so named." He goes on to speak, in his accustomed style of exaggeration, of deep valleys all around it, and frightful precipices, which made every approach to it quite impossible. The fortress was rendered still more impregnable by walls and towers above, and deep ditches below.

This is sufficiently graphic, and almost accurate, for the position is naturally one of the strongest I ever examined. But, notwithstanding that, it was doomed to utter destruction. About the last of September, in the year sixty-nine of our era, the invincible legions of Rome closed around it, never to leave while a living man remained in Gamala. The Fifteenth Legion fortified their camp on the ridge to the east; the Fifth did the same farther round towards the north; and the Tenth was engaged in filling up the ditches on the south-eastern part, along the narrow neck which connected the citadel with the mountain on the south. Strong detachments also watched and hemmed in the devoted city on all sides, so that escape was impossible.

When the ditches were filled, and the way levelled up to a part of the wall that protected the lower city, the battering-rams were made to play upon it in three places with such fury that it soon gave way and fell. Through the gap rushed the iron-clad legions, with "mighty sound of trumpets, and noise of armor and shout of soldiers." But despair and frenzy nerved the hearts and arms of the Jews. They threw themselves madly upon their enemies, beat them back by main force, and overwhelmed them from above with darts, stones, and anything within reach. The Romans, hard pressed, rushed into the houses, that hung one over another along the steep declivity, in such numbers that the foundations gave way, those above falling on those below, house upon house, in horrible confusion, burying up and crushing to death whole ranks in a moment. Thus it happened that "a great number were ground to powder by those ruins, and a great many of those that got from under them lost some of their limbs, but a still greater number were suffocated by the dust that arose from those ruins."

Josephus was then a prisoner in the Roman camp, and witnessed the awful scene from a high point on the overhanging mountain. His description is, therefore, very minute and graphic. He says that the houses which fell with the Romans were low and not firm, and an inspection of the place shows that none but very low houses could have stood there at all, for the face of the mountain is nearly perpendicular. After dire confusion and wild disorder, in which Vespasian himself was in extreme danger of perishing, the Romans retreated to their camps, and the Gamalites celebrated their unexpected victory with the most extravagant rejoicings.

Brief was their triumph. Vespasian comforted and encouraged his army in a set speech. Titus came back from Syria with re-enforcements; a high tower on the wall was undermined, and fell with prodigious noise; the soldiers rushed in again, led on by Titus himself; everything gave way, and went down before the tenfold fury of the onset—the outer city first, and then the wonderful citadel itself was taken, and nearly all the inhabitants were put to the sword, even the women and helpless infants. Five thousand of those miserable people, seeing escape impossible, destroyed themselves; husbands threw their wives over the walls; parents seized their children and leaped madly from the ramparts, and were crushed into hideous masses in those yawning gulfs below. So fell Gamala, on the 23d of October, A.D. 69, after a siege of twenty-nine days. Of the entire population that thronged that city and citadel, only two women escaped. The next act in the drama of Israel's destruction opens on the hills around Jerusalem, where the long, bloody tragedy winds up with the total overthrow of that city and the holy temple, amidst agonies and carnage never seen before, and never to be repeated while the world stands.

The "hump of the camel" extends from south-east to north-west. The average width was not quite half the length, and the entire shape of the summit approaches an oval. On all sides it is surrounded by deep ravines, except the narrow neck which joins it to the main mountain. This neck is much lower than the hump, and both are several hundred feet lower than the surrounding heights. Indeed, the hump looks as though it had broken away from those gigantic cliffs, pushed out towards the lake to the north-west, and then settled down some five hundred feet below its original position, having only the narrow ridge to connect it with the mountain. The Bedawîn call the site el Jâmûsieh—the buffalo—and the ruins of Gamala, Kŭl'at el Hŭsn, the castle fortress.

Along the ridge, and particularly the eastern side of it, the exterior city was built, and in such fashion that Josephus says it looked as though it would fall down upon itself. The citadel, or hump, was entirely surrounded by a strong wall, which was carried along the very brink of the precipices, and in some parts arches had to be thrown from cliff to cliff to secure a practicable foundation. Josephus intimates that he built this wall, which is simply absurd; but the man that could build the walls around the top of Tabor in forty days might possibly construct those of Gamala in some idle moment! The fact is, that in neither case could Josephus have done more than slightly repair works which were there already.

The entire citadel, nearly a mile and a half in circuit, is covered with heavy buildings, and as the stone was indestructible basalt, they remain very much as the Romans left them. A straight and well-defined street runs from the ruins of the eastern gate to those of the only other gate at the north-western extremity of the hump. The tower in the centre of the citadel appears to have been the largest and highest of all. Near it once stood a synagogue, and another to the north-east of it, though Major Wilson thinks it "may have been a church; for there are remains which leave no doubt that the place was occupied after its destruction by the Romans." It is marvellous to see the ground thickly strewn with granite columns from Egypt, for there is no granite rock in this country.

How did they get them up to that giddy perch?

There must have been great wealth in the land, and roads and machinery, of which the Syrians of this day have no conception. The entire resources and power of the present generation would be exhausted, and fail in the attempt to carry any one of those columns from Tiberias to the top of the hump of the camel; and there are at least thirty of them in the immediate vicinity of the central tower, and some of them are more than fourteen feet long. On the east of that tower is a large underground cistern, the vault of which is a fine specimen of the Roman arch. There are also remains of water-pipes and numerous cisterns in every part of the citadel, and necessarily so, because there was no other supply of water. There are, besides Ionic and Doric, some Corinthian capitals cut in hard, black basalt — a curiosity in their way; and sarcophagi and sepulchral stones peculiar to that city; at least I have seen nothing like them elsewhere. But what marks it as a genuine Hebrew city is the total absence of inscriptions. There is not a solitary letter in any language.

Josephus mentions a phenomenon as occurring at Gamala, the reality of which I happened to verify in my own experience. Speaking of the last assault upon the citadel, when Vespasian brought the whole army to support his son Titus, he says: "Now this upper part of the city was very rocky, and difficult of ascent, and elevated to a vast altitude, and very full of people on all sides, and encompassed with precipices, whereby the Jews cut off those that came up to them. However, there arose such a divine storm against them as was instrumental in their destruction. This carried the Roman darts upon them, and made those which they threw return back, and drove them obliquely away from them. Nor could the Jews, indeed, stand upon their precipices by reason of the violence of the wind."

Without supposing there was anything specially divine in the wind which blew down the ravines and over the ruins on my visit, yet it was so vehement that I could not stand upon the ramparts for a minute. Indeed, the depths below are so profound, in many parts, that no one can look into them without a shudder, even in the calmest weather. It occurred to me at the time that this incidental notice by a contemporary of a furious wind rushing down towards and upon the lake is a happy corroboration of the evangelical narratives, in which similar phenomena are repeatedly mentioned. To say the least, it is in entire accord with them.

With the single exception of Jerusalem, Gamala furnishes the most remarkable fulfilment on record of those terrible predictions of the Old Testament prophets and of our Saviour concerning the destruction of the Jews, and in its desolation and solitude it is at this day a more impressive monument of divine judgment than even the Holy City itself.

My guide to Gamala was impatient at my long ramble over its ruins. He said that it is a chosen resort of robbers, which, by-the-way, I do not believe. They rarely frequent such a place as that unless it be in search of hid treasure. Sheikh Mahmûd and his men were extremely suspicious of the purpose of my visit, and no explanations, reasonings, or protestations had the slightest effect in removing their belief that I visited Gamala in search for gold. When I appealed to the fact that some of their own men were going with me, they replied that all I would do then was to take a copy of the localities where the treasure was, so that I might come back in the night and carry it away. When I asked them why they did not take it themselves, they gave two reasons: first, that they had no dalîl, or guide, to the exact spot; and, secondly, that they had no charm of sufficient potency to subdue the jân—spirits that keep guard over the treasure.

The Arabs universally believe in the existence of such guards, and of charms or names which will subdue them. There is no tale on this subject in the "Thousand and One Nights," however extravagant, but what is to them credible and real. A large part of their conversation is made up of preposterous stories of the same kind. They enter into minute details of localities, caves, rooms, closed doors, slabs with iron rings, etc., ending always with some obstinate door which none of their "charms" could open; or, if they broke it open by main force, they were beaten back, thrown to the ground, blinded, suffocated with fumes of sulphur, or in some other miraculous way compelled by the guardian spirits to abandon the attempt. Of those creatures, also, they give the most extraordinary descriptions, and firmly believe their own stories.

This amazing superstition is not only a source of constant annoyance to the traveller, but in out-of-the-way parts of the country greatly increases the difficulties and the dangers of exploration. I am not sure but that my talkative guide from Sheikh Mahmûd was induced to watch us so strictly under the idea that we were intending to carry away the coveted treasure. Doubtless, too, it is this apprehension that induces Arabs often to conceal interesting localities from the traveller, or to refuse to accompany him to them; and they have been known to mislead by false directions.

The British consul of Damascus, in furnishing me with letters of protection to a number of Arab sheikhs in the mountains east of the Jordan, informed me that I must not carry any instruments, nor be seen copying inscriptions or drawing plans, for it would certainly endanger my life, in spite of all the protection which he could afford me. These remarks, of course, apply to the remoter parts of the land—to routes and sites entirely under the control of the Bedâwin. And yet, even in the most civilized districts, the people are provokingly pertinacious in ascribing our visits to old ruins to this, the only intelligible motive to their minds. That we should come from far, toil hard, and spend money merely to examine historic sites, is to them absurd and ridiculous.

There are a few places near Gamala that deserve a passing notice. That fortified rock on the north is called Nŭkb, and the ruins upon it are evidently of the same age as those of Gamala. The sharp pinnacle farther north, which resembles a church steeple, is Kurein el Jerâdeh. East of Kŭl'at el Hŭsn is Fîk, a considerable village on the top of the mountain, occupying the supposed site of the ancient Aphek, the city to which Benhadad fled after one hundred thousand of his soldiers had been slain in battle by Ahab. The city, however, proved almost as destructive as the army of Israel; for "a wall fell upon twenty and seven thousand of the men that were left."[1] That terrible catastrophe may have been caused by an earthquake; and, after having seen the effects of the earthquake in Safed and Tiberias, I can understand and credit this narrative.

The peculiar character of the site would render the destruction only the more extensive and inevitable. Burckhardt passed through Fîk in 1812; and he informs us that the town is built around the base of a hill in the shape of a crescent, not unlike the topography of Safed; and it was this circumstance, probably, which rendered the overthrow of Aphek in the time of Benhadad so destructive. The Fîk of our day is a village, containing about two hundred families, dwelling in huts built out of the extensive ruins of the ancient city.

Burckhardt heard of Kŭl'at el Hŭsn, and supposed that it marked the site of Argob, the capital of the kingdom of Og. That is scarcely possible; indeed, it is not certain, from the various notices of Argob, that it was a city at all. In Deuteronomy iii. 13, 14, we read of "the region of Argob," and of "all the country of Argob," and the same in 1 Kings iv. 13; but nothing is said of a city of that name.

Directly south of Kŭl'at el Hŭsn, on the mountain, is an inhabited village, called Kefr Hârib, with ancient remains similar to those at Fîk; and below it are the ruins of a castle, said to bear the name of el Kawayir. The plain between the lake shore and the mountain widens as one advances southward, and becomes more fertile. Farther south is Khŭrbet es Sŭmrah; and, judging from its present appearance, it seems to have been a ruin for generations. About half an hour from there is the village of es Semakh, near the south-eastern shore of the lake, and not far from the outgo of the Jordan. It has about one hundred wretched hovels, constructed of cobble-stones from the shore, loosely laid up, and daubed on the outside with untempered mortar. One or two houses and the manzûl for strangers are, however, built in part of cut stone taken from the ruins of the old town.

Es Semakh is supposed to occupy the site of Hippos, a place of some importance, mentioned amongst the cities of Decapolis in the Onomasticon and by Josephus. Hippos gave the name of Hippene to the district about it, and Josephus states that both it and Gadara were Grecian cities. It is evident that, in the time of Christ, the region around the south-eastern end of the lake, including Gergesa, was largely occupied by heathen. The present inhabitants of es Semakh are Moslems, and, of necessity, confederates in robbery with their neighbors, the Diab Bedawîn. No wonder the latter prefer the freedom of the country and the open tent to the confinement and filth of such a place. I have spent a few days encamped on the beach below the village, and had ample time to explore the southern shore of the lake, as well as the outgo of the Jordan. In the banks above the beach are innumerable nests of the wŭrwâr, the beautiful green-and-blue bee-eater. The beach is covered with pebbles of flint, jasper, chalcedony and agate, and several varieties of fresh-water shells. But, though situated close to the shore of this beautiful "sea of Galilee," and with scenery around it in many respects the most interesting in this world, nothing would tempt one to live in the miserable hamlet of es Semakh.

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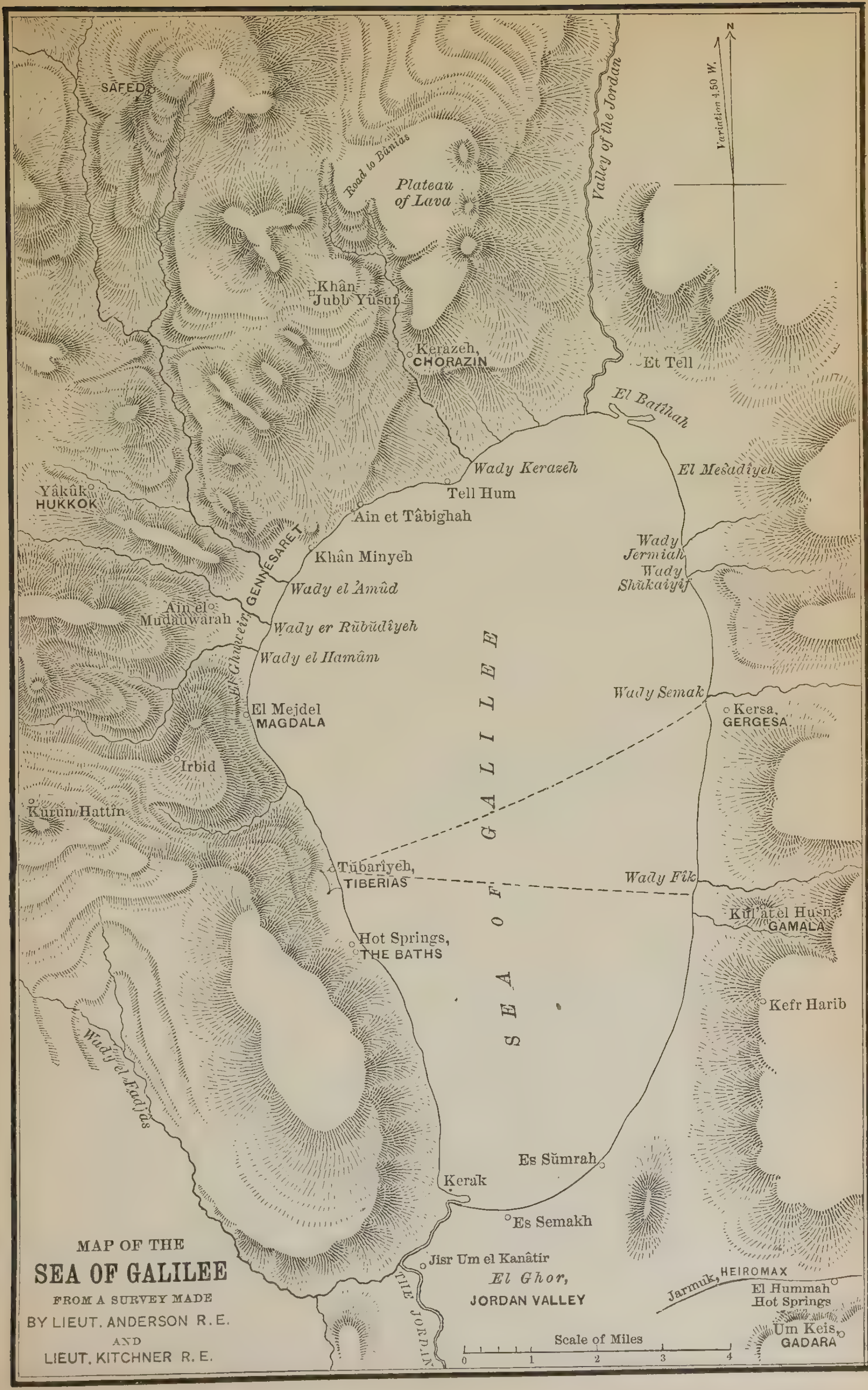
[1] 1 Kings xx. 26–30.

The fears of our boatmen have been fully realized; for not the faintest breeze now ripples the placid surface of the water, and our progress over it is very slow. As the sun sinks down behind the hills of Galilee, the shadows of evening gather around us, and the silence and loneliness of the lake are oppressive and saddening. Ours is now the only boat on a sea that in former times had many "ships" sailing to and fro over its surface from the cities and villages situated upon its shores.

Surely, this utter desolation will not be perpetual. The time must come when the shores of this Galilæan sea and the surrounding hill-sides will again be dotted with towns and villages.

Such a happy transformation is not impossible. It would be easy to construct a good road—a railway even—from Tiberias down the valley of the Jordan to Beisân, and thence across the plain of Esdraelon to the Bay of Acre. Such a road would draw to Tiberias the pastoral and agricultural productions, not only of this immediate neighborhood but also those of the Haurân, and of other fertile regions east of the Jordan, and would speedily restore


MAP OF THE
SEA OF GALILEE
FROM A SURVEY MADE
BY LIEUT. ANDERSON R. E.
AND
LIEUT. KITCHNER R. E.

to this now silent lake its former commercial activity. Nothing of that kind, however, could enhance the surpassing interest with which the Sea of Galilee and its surroundings are now and must ever be invested.

One is constantly reminded of the fact that the public life and marvellous works of the blessed Redeemer were intimately associated with these shores. Here he taught most of those lessons of divine wisdom recorded in the gospel narratives. Here, too, he wrought his mighty miracles, "and manifested forth his glory."

And from the shore of this lake he selected those twelve wonderful men who were to establish that kingdom to which there shall be no end, and carry his sayings to the ends of the earth; for "this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come."[1] Many of the apostles belonged to the humble craft of fishermen. It was while Jesus "walked by the sea of Galilee [that] he saw Simon, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." A little farther on he gave the same call to "James and John his brother," who were "mending their nets." They were in a boat much like ours, I suppose; and it was from the stern of such a boat as this that he taught the multitude standing on the shore, "and he spake many things unto them in parables." It was "in the hinder part of the ship," probably like this fishing-boat we are in now, and with sails and oars such as these, that Jesus was "asleep on a pillow," when "there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy;" and the terrified disciples awoke him with the cry, "Master, carest thou not that we perish? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm." And it was upon the stormy surface of this sea that Jesus walked, and from its raging billows that he rescued the frightened Peter.

The very fish of this sea have a conspicuous record in Gospel history. "The two small fishes" that were added to the "five barley loaves," which fed the "five thousand men, beside women and children," were caught from this lake; as were also the "few

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[1] Matt. xxiv. 14.

FISHING-BOAT ON THE SEA OF GALILEE.

fishes" that were given to the four thousand hungry hearers that had been with Jesus "three days in the wilderness," and had "nothing to eat." It was from the mouth of a fish, caught with a hook, that Peter took the "tribute money," and paid for himself and his Master. A miraculous draught of fishes caused the amazed Peter to fall "down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." It was by a similar draught "of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three," caught by Peter and his associates when they "cast the net on the right side of the ship," that the risen Redeemer revealed himself to his disciples on the shore of this sea. "Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread." Nor are these all the references to "ships," to fish and fishing. It was by eating a "piece of broiled fish" before his disciples that Jesus sought to convince them of the reality of his resurrection from the dead. But our boat having "come to land," our sail "unto the other side of the lake" is over.

Sunday, May 18th.

I went into the town this morning early to visit the so-called Church of St. Peter. It is in the central part of the town, and close to the shore of the lake. The church is simply a vaulted room, with neither nave columns nor side aisles, and without windows. At the west end is a court through which one enters the edifice. The congregation this morning was small, and the service, though in a language I did not understand, simple and unaffected.

I can corroborate the statement of Dr. Robinson that the "court and church have been the usual resting-place of Frank travellers in Tiberias." On my first visit to this town, I and my companions spent the Sabbath in that room; and the incidents of that day, as I now recall them, impress me with the fact that great changes have occurred in this place and throughout the country during the past half century. Travellers, now so numerous, were then few and far between; and the present mode of travelling is very different from what it used to be. Ours was the only party here at that time, and we had neither tent, canteen, nor cook. As there was no place in Tiberias where strangers could be entertained, we were lodged in the old Church of St. Peter, and our animals were stabled in an adjoining room. Nor was there any objection to our thus converting that venerable structure into a temporary khân.

The few people who attended mass came early, so we were obliged to rise at dawn, roll up our beds, and have the room prepared for the morning service. The men smoked their long pipes in the court, and discussed the news of the day; while the women exchanged salutations, and inquired after each other's welfare. When the priest arrived, the men left their pipes in the court, and their shoes at the door, and all stood—for there were no seats—patiently waiting until the time came to say Amen. The chief part of the service consisted in waving smoking censers before faded pictures of reputed saints, and occasionally in the faces of the people, as well as our own.

The priest was a tall, emaciated person, whose sepulchral tones echoed through the gloomy room like a voice from another world. After the little assembly had been dismissed, he remained to converse with us, but could impart very little information. He seemed to believe that the church was built by Peter himself, on the spot where our Lord appeared to him after his resurrection. The monks of the Latin convent of Nazareth now hold religious services in the church, especially on St. Peter's day, to whom the edifice is dedicated. Their tradition ascribes the erection of the building to Helena, but the architectural indications suggest the age of the Crusades.

Sunday, May 18th. Evening.

What a delightful sail on this sacred sea we had yesterday!

It was indeed, especially the row back after sunset, while twilight was fading into the solemn mysteries of night; and how brightly the stars illumined the domain of Him who telleth their number, and calleth them all by their names. Those very stars thus shone upon Him when he sailed over this same lake eighteen hundred years ago. Mystery of mysteries! The God-Man, the Divine Logos, did actually sail over this identical sea in a boat, by day and by night, as we have done; and not sun, moon, and stars only, but angels also beheld and wondered.

Obdurate indeed must be the unbelief of him in whose breast these sacred shores awaken no other emotions than such as are inspired by the natural scenery of ordinary lakes. He must be of those who have eyes but see not, ears but hear not, and hearts that cannot comprehend. It is a reproach to us all, that we can resort to these frequented places, and to the home of Him who came from heaven to die for our redemption, with so little reverence. We would not defend the claims of apocryphal relics or fabulous caverns. But it is unnatural, if not impious, to withhold or restrain emotions which those sacred scenes are calculated to awaken, and which they will inspire in every mind having faith enough to invest them with reality and life.

I have always supposed that the Gospel narratives would be better understood, and that the lessons of our divine Teacher would fall with more power upon the heart in the places where they were first delivered, than when read or heard in distant lands. Every true prophet and religious teacher has a birthday and a home, and we have a right to subject their history and instruction to the test of time and place to ascertain their truthfulness and authenticity, and, if they are genuine, such scrutiny will greatly illustrate and emphasize their meaning. Nor is it irreverent to apply these tests to the life and teachings of Him who spoke as "never man spake—as one having authority, and not as the scribes." Can we not concentrate upon the sacred page the scattered rays of light which have gleamed across the path from time to time during our wanderings about the home of the risen Redeemer?

We can, at any rate, make the attempt, without the slightest apprehension that the result will prove the record to be a forgery. Everything will be found in perfect agreement with all ascertained facts of history, topography, and chronology. The allusions to time in the sacred narratives are not numerous, but they agree entirely with the age of our Lord's advent. When there is occasion to refer to matters in which this idea is involved, it is done with simplicity and naturalness.

A few examples will best illustrate this. It is implied in various incidental allusions that, when the home of our Lord was at Capernaum, the shores of this lake were thickly inhabited by Jews, and that they were under the government of the Romans. Here was the publican, the Roman tax-gatherer, "sitting at the receipt of custom;" and Jesus even chose one of his disciples—Matthew, or Levi—from that class.[1] But these conditions could only have existed in this region about the time of Christ's advent—not long before, for the Roman conquest of the country was then comparatively recent; not long after, for this region was destroyed and depopulated by Vespasian and Titus; and subsequently there were no publicans, or revenue-officers, in Capernaum. When Jesus, however, was here, all these things existed, just as implied in the Gospel narratives.

We have examined the "image and superscription" of the Roman penny in the land where the tax was gathered, and with the evidences scattered all around us that those lordly Romans were actually here. History, the treasured coin, and prostrate ruins, unite in proving that the tax-gathering Romans, the cavilling Pharisees, and the teacher Jesus, were all here; and the answer of Jesus, "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's," is admirably illustrated and confirmed. The demand of the tribute-money for the Temple service made to Peter in behalf of his Master, and which gave occasion for the miracle recorded in Matthew xvii. 24–27, could not have been made after the Temple itself was destroyed by Titus, in A.D. 79. And, what is more remarkable, the "piece of money" found in the fish's mouth was a stater, a Greek coin then current in this part of the land, of the exact amount of the tax "for me and thee," and received by the Jews for that very tribute as equivalent to their shekel. Nor are these the only incidents that refer to the time of our Lord's residence on the shore of this lake which accord with, and are corroborated by, authentic history.

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[1] Matt. ix. 9; Mark ii. 14.

The references to topography are both numerous and accurate. We need only mention Nazareth, and Cana, and Capernaum, and Chorazin, and Bethsaida, and the regions around this lake. Everything is natural, and in accordance with ascertained facts, even to the omission of this city of Tiberias in the list of places visited by our Lord. The verbal accuracy is always pleasant to meet. Thus, Jesus is said to go down from Cana to Capernaum; and we now know that the latter place was not only the lowest, but actually nearly seven hundred feet below the Mediterranean Sea. And so, also, in comparing his disciples to "a city that is set on a hill," if Jesus pointed to Safed, as he probably did, nothing could be more emphatic. That town, set on a hill about three thousand feet above the lake, is seen from a great distance, and cannot be hidden.

The allusions to manners and customs are still more numerous than those to the topography of the land; and they agree perfectly with that period in the history of this country, and the condition and character of its people. It is implied in almost countless ways that those with whom our Lord associated on these shores were accustomed to out-door life. They meet on the mountain to hear him preach; they follow him into a desert place of Bethsaida to be fed; they spend whole days abroad without any apparent provision for either shelter, sleep, or food; they are found in the open court of houses or on the shore of the lake at all times. Now, all those details are here, just as they should be—the mountain, the desert place, the shore, the open court, the warm climate, the habits of the present people—everything in exact accord with the Gospel narratives. The inhabitants now not only go forth into the country as then represented, but they remain there, and sleep in the open air, if occasion require, without the slightest inconvenience.

The incidental mention of "women and children" in the great assemblies gathered around Jesus is true to Oriental life, strange as it may appear to those who read so much about female seclusion in the East. In the great gatherings of this day—at funerals, weddings, festas, and fairs—women and children often constitute the largest portion of the assemblies. I have seen hundreds of those gatherings in the open air; and should a prophet now appear on these shores, with a tithe of the celebrity of Jesus of Nazareth, there would quickly "follow him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judæa, and from beyond Jordan."

Ignorant and worldly as the people are, there is an irresistible bias in Orientals of all religions to run after the mere shadow of a prophet or a miracle-worker. A miserable deception was practised in Lebanon a few years ago, in order to raise funds to build a church. The water that burst out while the workmen were digging the foundation, it was published abroad, would restore the blind to sight; and quickly multitudes of those unfortunate people, from all parts of Palestine and Syria, and even from Egypt, hastened to the spot, to bathe their sore or sightless eyes in the wonder-working water. I saw files of blind leading the blind, painfully pressing on towards the blessed stream; and it was not until after great suffering and loss that the deluded multitude could be restrained from making the worse than useless pilgrimage. Such are the Orientals of to-day; and to know what was the character, in these respects, of those to whom Christ preached, we need only study that of the people around us.

Instruction addressed to such a people, assembled in the open country or on the sea-side, would naturally abound in illustrations drawn from country life and from surrounding objects. No others would so seize upon their attention, be so readily comprehended, or so tenaciously remembered. Accordingly, we hear the divine Teacher exclaim at Shechem, "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." Thus, too, he speaks of the vineyards; of the good branches purged; of the dry ones gathered for the fire; of the penny-a-day laborers standing in the market-place, waiting to be hired; and of their receiving their wages at the close of each day. Such things as these we now see constantly, and to the minutest shade of verbal accuracy.

The sparrows that chatter on every man's house-top teach lessons of trust in the providential care of our heavenly Father, and lilies more gloriously arrayed than Solomon rebuke undue solicitude as to wherewithal we shall be clothed. We have the leaven and its lesson; the mustard-seed, with its prophetic promise to the Church; the sower's four kinds of soil, and their diverse results; the good seed, and the tares of the enemy; the fig-tree, with its promise of spring, and its warning to the fruitless. Or, descending from the land to the lake, we have the fishermen, their ships, their nets, and their occupation, so suggestive to apostles and preachers who must be fishers of men. We need not enlarge this list; every reader of the New Testament can add to it from his own recollection; but it is important to remark that all these allusions are perfectly natural and appropriate to the country, the people, the Teacher, the age, and every other circumstance mentioned or implied in the evangelical narratives. The teachings and illustrations of our Lord would have been out of place in any other country except this, and many of them could not have been applied anywhere else.

There is one aspect of Christ's character, and one class of allusions in his public teaching, which deserves special consideration. Our Lord was most emphatically a religious teacher and reformer, and, of course, we expect to find in the Gospel narratives constant reference to the manners and morals, the superstitious and religious ceremonies of the people; and so we do, and with wonderful correspondence to the then existing state of things in this same land. Contemplate the man Jesus, the Teacher, the Reformer, as he stood on the shores of this lake eighteen hundred years ago. Who and what was he to the men of that age? He was a Jew. But what was it to be an ordinary Jew of Nazareth in the year thirty of our era? In many respects, just what it is to be one now in this Tiberias or in Safed—to be intensely and offensively fanatical—to regard one's self as pre-eminently holy, the special favorite of God, and to despise all others—to be amazingly superstitious—to hold obstinately, and defend fiercely an infinite number of silly traditions and puerile fables—to fritter away the whole life and power of religion in a rigid observance of trifling ceremonies. The Jew of Tiberias to-day is self-righteous, proud, ignorant, rude, quarrelsome, hypocritical, dishonest, selfish, avaricious, immoral, and such, in the main, were his ancestors eighteen centuries ago. We know this, not so much from the New Testament as from Josephus, that special pleader and grand apologist for his nation.

Now here is a problem for the sceptic, How comes it that there is nothing of this Jew in Jesus? How could the model man—the perfect pattern for all ages and all lands—how could he grow, develop, and mature in Nazareth? Who taught him the maxims of the Sermon on the Mount? Whose example of charity, kindness, and compassion did he copy? How did he alone of all Jews, nay, of all mankind, conceive, propound, and practice perfectly a purely spiritual religion? That he did all this is undeniable, and it is for those who find in Jesus of Nazareth nothing but a common Jew to explain the wonderful phenomenon.

Jesus grew up from his youth to mature age amongst a people intensely mercenary. This vice corrupted and debased every relation of life. Here, again, Josephus not only agrees with the writers of the New Testament, but goes beyond them in depicting the avaricious nature of the people. We can fill in the outlines of his picture from the every-day life and manners of the people about us. Everybody trades, speculates, cheats. The shepherd-boy on the mountain talks of piastres from morning to night; so does the muleteer on the road, the farmer in the field, the artisan in his shop, the merchant in his magazine, the kâdy in the hall of judgment, the mullah in the mosk, the pasha in his palace, the monk, the priest, the bishop—money, money, money! the desire of every heart, the theme of every discourse, the end of every aim. Justice and religion, too, is bought and sold. Nothing for nothing, but everything for money—at the divan of the judge, the gate of the palace, the altar of the priest. Each petition, each prayer has its price, every sin its tariff.

Our Lord was an Oriental, and was brought up amongst just such a people; but who can say that there was the faintest shadow of this mercenary spirit in his character? With uncontrolled power to possess all, he owned nothing. He had no place to be born but in another man's stable, no cradle but a manger, no place to pray in but the wilderness, no place to die but on the cross of an enemy, and no grave but that lent by a friend. At his death he had nothing to bequeath to his mother, and left her in the charge of a disciple. He was as free from the mercenary spirit as though belonging to a world where the very idea of property was unknown. And this total abstinence from all ownership was not of necessity, but of choice. There is nothing like it, nothing that approaches it in the history of universal man. It stands out perfectly and divinely original.

Jesus was the founder of a new religion; and the desire and effort of all merely human minds would be to secure its acceptance by connecting discipleship with personal pleasure or temporal advantage. Milton makes the devil say to Jesus, "If at great things thou wouldst arrive, get riches first; get wealth, and treasure heap." And this temptation no mere man under such circumstances could resist. But Christ, from the first, took his position above the human race, and to the end retained it without an effort. He divorces his Gospel from any alloy of earth. Money, property, and all they represent and control, have nothing to do with membership in his society, with citizenship in his kingdom. The very conception of this idea was divine. Not only is it not human, but it is every whit contrary to what is human. He could not have borrowed it, for he was surrounded by those who were not able to comprehend it—no, not even the apostles, until after the day of

Pentecost. As to the multitude, they sought Jesus, not because they saw the miracles and were convinced, but because they "did eat of the loaves and were filled." And so it always has been, and is now in this same country.

In this regard our missionary experience is most painful, and I hope somewhat peculiar. It would not be charitable—possibly not just—to say to every applicant, You seek us, not because you have examined our doctrines and believe them, but for the loaves and fishes of some worldly advantage which you hope to obtain; and yet it is difficult for me at this moment to recall a single instance in which that was not the first moving motive. Nor does this apply to converts to Protestantism merely, but to all sects, and to all religious changes amongst the people. Religion is, in fact, a species of property, valued, not for its truth, but for its available price in the market. And thus it was in the time of our Saviour, and he knew it. He knew that the multitude followed him for the loaves and fishes; that they sought to make him king, that they might revel in ease, luxury, and power; that they crowded about him to be healed as people now do around our physicians; that one called him Master to obtain a decision in his favor against his brother in regard to the estate, as many now join the missionaries the better to press their claims in court.

The determination to make religion, or the profession of it, a meritorious act, deserving temporal remuneration or personal favor, is almost universal. It was so in the time of Christ. According to the parable, some will even claim admittance into heaven because they had eaten and drunk in his presence, and, still more, because he had taught in their streets. Now, however ridiculous such pretensions may appear to men in the Western World, I have had applications for money in this country urged earnestly, and even angrily, for the same reasons. Our Lord founded the parable not on fancy, but on fact.

How utterly loathsome must have been such a spirit to the unworldly heart of Jesus, and yet it was ever manifesting itself even in his chosen apostles. Here, again, Christ is our divine example. Hateful as was this earthly, grovelling spirit, yet how patiently he bore with it! It is related of Dr. Chalmers that a certain man visited him several times as a religious inquirer, and when he imagined that he had awakened sufficient interest in his behalf, he cautiously let out the fact that he was in want of money; but no sooner was his object apparent than the wrath of the good doctor burst out in a furious tempest, and he almost kicked the mercenary wretch out of his house. Without stopping to inquire whether or not in this he imitated the gentleness and forbearance of his Master under similar provocation, I will only say that if the doctor had been a missionary in this country, and had adopted the same summary mode with those who sought his presence from precisely the same motives, he might just as well have remained at home, for all the good he would have effected here.

But Christ did not thus dispose of the matter. He treated it as one, and only one, of the radical corruptions of religion which it was his mission to reform; and in attempting that he manifested the same divine wisdom and forbearance which characterized his whole course. He had to deal with it even to the day of his death in his chosen friends. They were constantly thinking of the temporal kingdom, and of seats of honor and power on his right hand. There are few men in Syria to-day who do not believe, or at least feel, that the assumption of the evangelical costume, for example, does, *ipso facto*, entitle the person to share the temporalities of those by whom they have been discipled. And in numberless cases where this claim has been denied, even in the kindest manner, the teacher and the Gospel have been forsaken at once.

I have sought earnestly for the cause of this odious element in the religious character of Orientals. Customs so deeply rooted and so general, and yet so manifestly base, must have their origin in powerful influences, acting steadily and universally upon society. Close observation and long reflection lead to the conclusion that there are, and have been from remote ages, several causes, all tending to connect religion indissolubly with man's selfish interests and his temporal affairs. They may all be traced, perhaps, to the constitution of civil society. Absolute despotism and lawless anarchy are conditions under which men seek and find additional security for property, liberty, and life. Where either of these prevails, men instinctively resort to religion or superstition for an asylum, and not in vain. Rarely is a tyrant or demi-god so daring as to trample underfoot the sanctions and safeguards of firmly-rooted religious rights; and when any one has been mad enough to attempt such a violation, it has generally cost him his life. Even unbridled and ferocious anarchy is held in restraint, and ultimately subdued by the sanctities and sanctions of religion.

The East has generally been cursed with one or other, or with both of these tyrannies, to this hour. Hence the people have resorted and do resort to religion for assistance and safety, and have designedly made it spread its protecting robes over the entire interests of society, temporal as well as spiritual. They have at length come to regard it mainly as a means to obtain and maintain the safety of person and property; and that religion which secures to its followers the greatest amount of relief and prosperity is, in their estimation, the best. Hence they are ready to embrace a new faith for relief from a trifling tax, or for any other earthly advantage; and, naturally enough, they change back again with equal facility if disappointed. In this they are merely making that use of religion which they understand and think most valuable, nor do they feel ashamed in thus dealing with it. It is a legitimate use of the precious commodity. To us, who have always lived under a form of government where temporal rights and privileges have been guarded by law, this is a monstrous perversion; and we cannot adequately appreciate the pressure which has crowded these people into such narrow and mercenary ways.

It is a fact that to this hour religion is made to throw its shelter around the separate existence and the temporal rights of the various sects that dwell in this country. They depend upon it, and employ it without scruple on all occasions. Even European influence in their behalf is mainly based upon it, and, to a certain extent, increases the evil. One nation protects the Maronites because they are papists; another the Orthodox Greeks as such; a third the Greek Catholics; a fourth the Druses. True it is that in thus dealing with those sects they do but avail themselves of customs inwrought into the very constitution of society, and from remote antiquity. I know not when to date their beginning.

The divinely established economy of the Hebrews contained this element largely developed. The Hebrew commonwealth was a religious corporation, which guaranteed to every faithful member of it extensive worldly advantages. The letter of its promises is almost wholly temporal; and if we glance back at the history of this land from Abraham to this day, we shall find that religion has been inseparably interwoven with the secular affairs of the people. This important fact accounts, in a great measure, for the present phenomena in regard to it. By a process short, natural, and certain to be adopted by corrupt human nature, religion has been made to subserve man's mercenary desires and evil passions.

This miserable and fatal perversion Jesus of Nazareth alone, of all religious teachers, earnestly attempted to correct. He laid the axe to the root of this old and corrupt tree. He revealed a pure, spiritual religion, and established a kingdom not of this world; but, alas! his followers either could not or would not maintain it. They fell from his high position into bondage to the beggarly elements of this world.

He who is Truth—who came into the world to bear witness to the truth—divinely accomplished his mission. With the world and all its solicitations and entanglements beneath his feet, he tolerated nothing in his kingdom but truth. This cut up by the roots the vast systems of clannish and state religions, founded on fables, and upheld by falsehood, force, and hypocrisy. He spurned with indignation the traditions of priests and the cunning adjustments of politicians. He would have nothing but truth for doctrine, nothing but honest faith in the disciple. To understand how vast was the number of superstitions, lying vanities, idle fancies, vain ceremonies, abominable deceptions, and foul corruptions which had overgrown religion in his day, it is only necessary to examine that which claims to be religion in this same country at the present moment.

Should that divine Truth again visit this land, with fan in hand, he would scatter to the four winds the mountains of chaff which have gathered here for ages, and he would hurl the thunder-bolts of his wrath against a thousand hypocritical deceivers of mankind. Oh, how radical, profound, and far-reaching are the simplest laws of Christ, and how prodigious the revolution they contemplate and require! "Swear not at all." Why, the whole Arab race must stop talking altogether. They cannot say simply Yea, yea, nay, nay. "Lie not one to another." Impossible! everything within, without, and about you is a lie. "Do to others as ye would that they should do to you." This precept seems to want a *not* somewhere or other. "Salute no man by the way." Absurd! we must multiply compliments as fast as possible, and utter them with grace and gravity to friend and foe alike. But why adduce any further comparisons and contrasts? The subject is inexhaustible, and enough has been said to prove that Jesus did not borrow the lessons he taught. They are not from man, of man, nor by man, but they are of God.

And now around this quiet lake the evening of the day of rest deepens into the succeeding night, and from the green pastures on the hills the droves return to their master's crib within the city walls. I have seen no place where so many are brought home together—goats, sheep, cows, and even donkeys. The thought struck me, as they were entering the gate, and I hurried after them to see whether these Tiberian donkeys were as wise as those Isaiah mentions. True to the life, no sooner had the drove got within the walls than it began to disperse. Every ox knew perfectly well his owner, and the way to his house, nor did it get bewildered for a moment in the mazes of the narrow and crooked alleys. As for the ass, he walked straight to the door, and up to "his master's crib," without turning to bid good-night to his companions of the field. I followed some into their habitation, and saw each take his appropriate manger, and begin his evening meal of dry tibn.

Isaiah says in all this they were wiser than their owners, who neither knew nor considered, but forsook the Lord, and "provoked the Holy One of Israel."[1] As to the donkey, he is a slandered and much-abused animal—poorly fed, hard worked, overloaded, and beaten without reason or mercy. Their saddles are so ill-shaped, so hard, and so ragged, that they wound the back and shoulders, and the rough ropes which bind on the burdens lacerate the flesh wherever they come in contact with it. No wonder, therefore, that he has a gaunt frame, a tottering gait, ears which slouch heavily round his head, and a stupid and woe-begone stare out of hopeless eyes. When young and unbroken, they are as lively and playful as kittens. If well fed, the male is, without exception, the most pugnacious brute in the land. Dogs full of fire and fight as Dandy Dinmont's varieties of pepper will yet sometimes be at peace, but two fat male donkeys can never be brought near together, by day or night, in summer or in winter, without instant war.

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[1] Isa. i. 3, 4.

Shut to the tent door, and put the candle outside, or we shall be overwhelmed by gnats. They are one of the plagues of this region. Once, when encamped on this very spot, they came in such incredible swarms that in five minutes their dead carcasses accumulated on the top and literally extinguished the candle. It seemed to me at the time that Tiberias might be rendered absolutely uninhabitable by this insignificant and almost invisible enemy. Has it ever occurred to you that the writers of the Bible were very indifferent to those sources of annoyance which travellers now dwell upon with such vehement and pathetic lamentation? Gnats, for example, are only mentioned once, and then not as an annoyance, but to introduce and give point to a severe rebuke upon pharisaical scrupulosity: "Ye blind guides, which strain at [or out] a gnat, and swallow a camel."[1] And certainly no comparison could better express the absurdity and hypocrisy of their conduct.

Another instance of this indifference to small annoyances is exemplified by the flea. Those most troublesome creatures are only mentioned by David in his complaint to Saul: "After whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea? For the King of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains."[2]

True; but the reference is very emphatic. There are at this moment hundreds of men, women, and children chasing these nimble creatures through all the mysteries and hiding-places of their manifold garments. Still, it is remarkable that such an omnipresent source of vexation should not be more frequently mentioned, and the more so, as in this matter the Bible differs entirely from most Oriental writings. The Arabs, in their poetry, fables, stories, and general literature, not only mention the flea, but with every

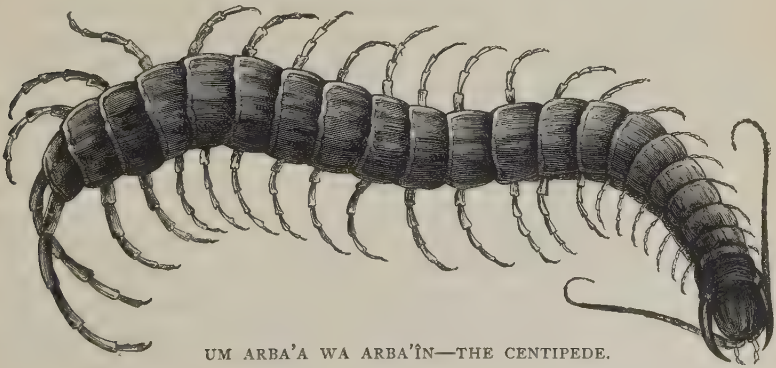
[1] Matt. xxiii. 24.

[2] 1 Sam. xxiv. 14; xxvi. 20.

possible term of dislike and malediction. The Bedawîn, though filthy to a proverb, and patient, *ad nauseam*, of other vermin, have great dread of the flea, and whenever they appear they break up their camp and move away. Indeed, it is quite in the power of fleas to compel such an evacuation. I have seen places where Arabs had been encamped literally swarming with them, as though the very dust had turned to fleas. An Arab proverb informs us that the king of the fleas holds his court in Tiberias. It is fortunate that etiquette does not oblige us to frequent it.

I was quite startled to find myself this morning in close proximity to a more formidable species of vermin than either gnats or fleas. While seated on a dilapidated sepulchre a large centipede crawled out cautiously, and made directly for my hand, which I quickly gave, and with it a smart stone, to add emphasis to the salutation. Are those ugly creatures really dangerous?

The bite of the centipede is not fatal, but is said to be extremely painful, and very slow to heal. The Arabs say that it strikes its claws into the flesh, and there they break off and remain, thus rendering the wound more troublesome. I never saw a person bitten by them, but their mere appearance makes one's flesh creep. Once, while the locusts were passing through Abeîh, they started up a very large centipede near my house, and as they marched over it without cessation it became perfectly furious; bit on the right hand and the left, writhed, and squirmed, and floundered in impotent wrath, and was finally worried to death. During this extraordinary battle its look was almost satanic.



UM ARBA'A WA ARBA'ÎN—THE CENTIPEDE.

XI.

TIBERIAS TO 'AIN ET TÎNY.

Tiberias to 'Ain et Tîny.—View from the Rocky Promontory north of Tiberias.—Plain of el Fulîyeh.—'Ain el Barîdeh.—Shoals of Fish.—Reservoirs at el Fulîyeh.—Feeding of the Five Thousand.—Scientific Exploration of the Lake of Tiberias.—M. Lortet.—Chromis, and other Varieties of Fish.—Canon Tristram.—Fishing with Poisoned Bait.—El Mejdel, Magdala.—Magadan.—Mary Magdalene.—Parable of the Wheat and the Tares.—The Transmutation of Wheat into Tares.—Wady el Hamâm.—Kul'at Ibn Ma'an.—Robbers' Caves.—Capture of the Robbers by Herod the Great.—Burckhardt.—Colonel Wilson's Description of the Caverns.—Cliffs above Wady Hamâm.—Irbid, Arbela.—Beth-arbel.—Fanaticism of the Jews in the Time of Christ.—Ruined Synagogue at Irbid described by Colonel Wilson.—Kŭrûn Hattîn.—Mount of the Beatitudes.—Feeding of the Five Thousand.—Hejâr en Nŭsâra.—Mensa Christi.—Outlook from the Summit of Kŭrûn Hattîn.—Lûbieh.—Battle of Hattîn.—Hattîn.—Neby Shû'eib.—Pilgrimages to Saints' Tombs.—Cultivating distant Fields.—The Scrip, or Wallet.—Charge of Christ to his Apostles.—"Salute no Man by the Way."—"Go not from House to House."—The Plain of Gennesaret well Watered.—'Ain el Hamâm.—'Ain el Mŭdŭawarah.—The Coracinus.—Dr. Robinson's Description of 'Ain el Mŭdaŭwarah.—Wady er Rŭbŭdîyeh.—Dr. Merrill.—Wady el 'Amud.—'Ain et Tîny.—'Ain et Tâbighah.—Josephus's Description of the Fertility of Gennesaret.—Gennesaret Fruitful in Thorns.—Harvest out of the Thorns.—Northern End of the Plain.—Petrified Cane and Wood.—Absence of Villages west of the Plain.—Yâkûk, Hukkok.—Nests of Field-sparrows.—Foxes and Birds of the Air.—Corroborations of the Gospel Narratives.—'Ain et Tîny.—Papyrus.—Khân Minyeh.—'Ain et Tîny to Tell Hûm, and the Site of Bethsaida.—Places of Interest connected with Christ's Ministry.—Rock-cut Canal.—'Ain et Tâbighah, the Fountain of Capharnaum, the Rock-cut Canal described by Colonel Wilson and Lieutenant Kitchner.—'Ain et Tâbighah, the Fountain of Capharnaum.—Manufacturing Suburb of Capernaum.—'Ain et Tâbighah to Tell Hûm.—Ruins at Tell Hûm.—Synagogue and Church described by Colonel Wilson.—House of Peter.—The Synagogue Built by the Roman Centurion.—The Bread of Life and the Pot of Manna.—"Exalted unto Heaven."—Charûl, Nettle.—Thorns and Thistles cumbering Ruins.—Clumps of Oleander.—Tell Hûm to Kherâzeh.—Chorazin.—Ruins at Kherâzeh.—Et Tell, Bethsaida.—Mes'adîyeh, City of Andrew and Peter.—Battle of Josephus with the Romans near Capernaum.—Marshes caused by Rivers in Palestine.—The Buffaloes.—Plain of el Batîhah.—Lodge in a Garden of Cucumbers.—Scare-crows in the Gardens.—Bethsaida Julias.—Royal Cities of

Philip.—Evening Ride along the Sea of Galilee.—Poetic Description of that Sea by McCheyne.—Claims of Khân Minyeh and Tell Hûm.—'Ain et Tîny the Fountain of Capharnaum, according to Dr. Robinson.—'Ain et Tîny and 'Ain et Tâbighah, and the Fish Coracinus.—Khân Minyeh a Roman Government Station.—Not the Residence of Peter nor the City of Jesus.—The Receipt of Custom, and the Place where Jesus sat at Meat.—Capernaum was probably not in the Plain of Gennesaret.—The Name Tell Hûm.—Tradition fixes Capernaum at Tell Hûm.—Peter's Wife's Mother.—Inlets along the Shore associated with the Teachings of Jesus, and the Call of the Disciples.

May 19th.

MOTION is a blessing, according to an Arabic proverb, and I find it pleasant to escape from that half-ruined town and be again in the saddle.

We are to visit this morning the so-called Mount of Beatitudes, and then ride across the plain of Gennesaret to our tents at 'Ain et Tîny. For the first hour the road lies above the shore of the lake northward to el Mejdel, and from there we will ascend the profound gorge of Wady el Hamâm to the ruins of Irbid, on our way to Kŭrûn Hattîn.

This rocky promontory north of Tiberias, over which we are now passing, though of no great elevation, commands the best general view of the Sea of Galilee that we have had.

The lake scenery is said by some to be tame and featureless, and, compared with the stern grandeur of that around the shore of the Dead Sea, it may be so; still, it is not destitute of natural beauty. When this placid sheet of water was enlivened by boats and ships, and the shores of the lake were studded with villages and towns, as it was at the time of Christ, the prospect must have been quite impressive. Beauty there is still, but very little life. There are no thriving villages, the highways are forsaken, and the shore is solitary and sad. The very ducks on the lake are "shockingly tame," and the fish in the water look up into one's face without the least alarm.

This little triangular plain below us is quite pretty; what is its name?

El Fulîyeh, and it is chiefly distinguished for several large fountains which burst out near the shore. The largest is called 'Ain el Barîdeh, the cold fountain, although the water is slightly tepid. It is, perhaps, on this account that fish are to be seen there in surprising numbers, especially in winter. I was once there when it seemed as if there were more fish than water for them to swim in. Having no fishing-tackle, I fired at them. After every shot some of the fish would leap out of the water, but without a boat I could not secure any of the killed and wounded. No one seeing such shoals of fish could doubt the truth of those narratives in the gospels which imply that the lake abounded with fish in the days of Christ. It may well be that they are even more numerous now than they were in those days, since there are so few fishermen about the lake at present.

Are those circular structures on the shore supposed to be ruined baths?

The probability is that they were erected, like the reservoirs at Râs el 'Ain, near Tyre, to raise the water of the fountains in order to irrigate the plain of el Fulîyeh, and drive the mills of el Mejdel. All such structures answer the double purpose of irrigation and of driving mills in their neighborhood.

We must not pass away from el Fulîyeh without noticing a tradition which, if it were true, would impart great interest to it. Bishop Arculf, who visited Palestine about A.D. 700, was shown this place as the site where the five thousand were fed with the five barley loaves and two fishes. That miracle is mentioned in the four gospels. The allusion to Bethsaida by Luke has led modern writers, in locating the site, to look for it on the north-eastern shore of the lake, and, I think, correctly.

El Fulîyeh does not accord with the Gospel narratives as I understand them. The home of Jesus was in Capernaum. He heard of the beheading of John the Baptist by Herod; and on that account, apparently, he retired from his jurisdiction to the other, or eastern, side of the sea. Luke says, "He took them [the disciples], and went aside privately into a desert place, belonging to the city called Bethsaida." Matthew and Mark state that "he departed thence by ship." The whole tenor of the narratives suggests that Jesus sought to go to a place where he and his disciples would be secure from the persecution of Herod. But to come from Capernaum to el Fulîyeh, so near Tiberias, would be to put himself into the midst of the apprehended danger.

If Jesus came here, there was no need of taking ship. He had only to walk along the western shore of the lake to reach this spot. But he could not have come here "privately," for it is directly below what must always have been the public highway. Matthew, Mark, and Luke state that they went to "a desert place."[1] This place could not be so called; and the inquiry of the disciples, "Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?" would be meaningless if el Fulîyeh was the place.[2] It could not have been, in any sense, "a desert place" at that time. Where buy bread? Why, in Magdala, not a mile off, or even at Tiberias itself. The incidents which occurred during the return of the disciples do not suggest this site as their place of departure. It was not until a whole night had been spent on the lake, most of it in toiling and rowing, that they reached "the land of Gennesaret."[3] But if el Fulîyeh was the place they started from, they had only to pass northward for a mile, and they would have had Magdala and the whole plain of Gennesaret close on their left hand.

For these and other reasons, I believe that Luke states the facts correctly. The "desert place" belonged to Bethsaida, and was probably near the southern end of the plain of el Batîhah, at the north-eastern side of the lake, and not at el Fulîyeh.

I suppose that tradition is a fair example of the custom amongst the monks and guides of the pilgrims, in those early ages, to select a locality that was convenient and safe instead of one more distant and dangerous.

Scientific parties have explored the Dead Sea, but I suppose this Lake of Tiberias has not been the subject of similar examinations.

The English and American Exploration Societies, through their able and indefatigable representatives, have devoted much time and expense to the survey and archæology of the lake and its surroundings. Quite recently M. Lortet spent several weeks here fishing and dredging; some of the results of his observations are very interesting. The lake, according to him, is nearly seven hundred feet below the level of the Mediterranean; and its greatest depth, near the entrance of the Jordan, he found to be about eight hundred feet. He obtained many different kinds of fish, some of which belonged to the species known as Chromis. His testimony in regard to the surprising abundance of fish in the lake is of special interest. Two castings of the net usually filled his boat—a statement that recalls the experience of the disciples, when Peter, amazed at the draught of fishes which they had taken, "fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord."[1]

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[1] Matt. xiv. 13, 15; Mark vi. 31, 32, 35; Luke ix. 10.

[2] Mark vi. 37.

[3] Matt. xiv. 34; Mark vi. 53.

Canon Tristram mentions two forms of the Chromis species which he obtained near this part of the lake, when encamped at el Medjel; and while walking along the shore he "had an opportunity of watching the mode of fishing as it is now carried on. An old Arab sat on a low cliff, and threw poisoned crumbs of bread as far as he could reach, which the fish seized, and, turning over dead, were washed ashore and collected for the market. The shoals were marvellous—black masses of many hundred yards long, with the black fins projecting out of the water as thickly as they could pack. No wonder that any net should break which enclosed such a shoal."[2]

Have you ever observed that method of catching fish?

Not exactly; but the natives around Lake Hûleh, especially at the north-west end, where is the fountain of el Mellâhah, sometimes cast into the water a fruit which so stupefies the fish that they are easily caught with the hand.

Yonder, on our right, near the shore of the lake is el Mejdel, perhaps the Migdal-el of the Old Testament, and the Magdala of the New. It is on the extreme southern edge of el Ghuweir, as Gennesaret's flowery plain is now called, and is a wretched hamlet of low huts huddled together, and ready, apparently, to tumble into a heap of black, basaltic rubbish. Whatever ruins or remains there may be about it have no claim to antiquity, though it is the sole representative of several towns that must have existed in this region.

Some have supposed that the true rendering of the name, in Matthew xv. 39, is Magadan, and that the name Magdala does not occur in the New Testament. Tradition, however, has long associ-

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[1] Luke v. 4–8.

[2] Land of Israel, pp. 429, 430.

EL MEJDEL—MAGDALA.

ated this place with the name of Mary Magdalene, "out of whom he [Jesus] had cast seven devils," and to whom "he appeared first" after he was risen from the dead.[1] There is no reason to doubt the identity of the site, or to dispute the only claim that the place can offer for special notice.

Its forlorn condition seems to be in significant keeping with the incident that has given to it a history. And yet, as Dean Stanley observes, through its connection with Mary Magdalene, its name has now been incorporated into all the languages of Europe.

Evil spirits of some sort must still possess the few Moslem inhabitants, for they are about the most sinister specimens in the country; yet they dwell on the shore of this silvery lake, and cultivate that once fertile plain of Gennesaret, which Josephus called the "ambition of nature."

And so it might still be called, to judge from this expanse of luxuriant barley and wheat. The plain appears like a waving field of grain, without hedge or fence to break the continuity.

Turn westward here, along the base of the mountain, and in half an hour we shall enter the great chasm of Wady el Hamâm. Let me call your attention to the "tares" growing amongst the barley. Both are in just the proper stage of development to illustrate the parable of Christ. In those parts where the grain has headed out, the tares have done the same, and there a child could not mistake them for wheat or barley; but where both are less developed, the closest scrutiny will often fail to detect them. Even the farmers, who in this country generally weed their fields, do not pretend to distinguish the one from the other until both are well grown. They would not only mistake good grain for tares, but very commonly the roots of the two are so intertwined that it is impossible to separate them without plucking up both. Both, therefore, must be left to "grow together until the harvest."[2]

The Arabic name for tares is zawân, and they abound all over the East, and are a great nuisance to the farmer. The grain is small, and is arranged along the upper part of the stalk, which stands perfectly erect. Its taste is bitter, and when eaten separately, or when diffused in ordinary bread, it causes dizziness, and often acts as an emetic. In short, it is a strong soporific poison, and must be carefully winnowed, and picked out of the wheat, grain by grain, before grinding, or the flour is not healthy. Of course the farmers are very anxious to exterminate it, but that is nearly impossible.

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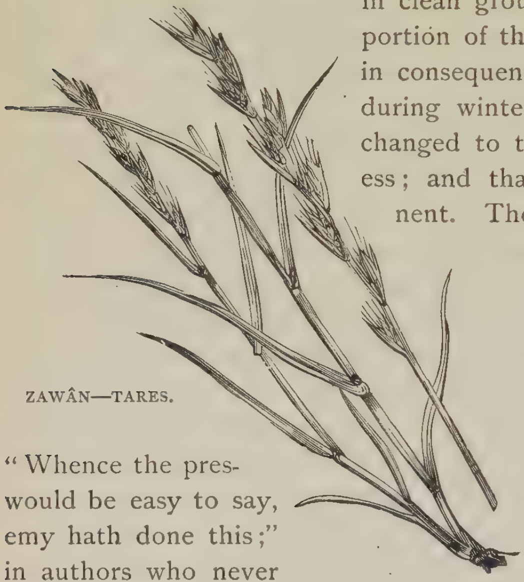
[1] Mark xvi. 9; John xx. 11–18.

[2] Matt. xiii. 24–30.

Grain-growers in this country believe that in very wet seasons, and in marshy ground, the wheat itself turns to tares. Nor is this a modern notion, or one confined to the ignorant. It is met with both in heathen writers and in the expositions of the early fathers. The farmer maintains that he "sowed good seed in his field," and in clean ground, and yet that a large portion of the crop is turned to tares in consequence of extraordinary rains during winter—that is, that wheat is changed to tares by one single process; and that this change is permanent. These extemporaneous tares produce tares, nor can the process be reversed; tares cannot change back to wheat.



ZAWÂN—TARES.

But how answer the inquiry of the farmer, "Whence the present crop of tares?" It would be easy to say, as in the parable, "an enemy hath done this;" but, though I have read in authors who never resided in Palestine that bad men do thus injure their enemies, I have not found a person in the country who had either known or heard of such an act. It is certainly remarkable that Arab malice has never adopted this mode of injuring its victim. It must have been done, however, in the time of our Saviour, or he would not have mentioned it in his parable.

We must, therefore, find some other solution of a phenomenon which occurs so often. I suppose that several separate causes conspire to bring about the result. First, very wet weather in winter kills wheat, while it is favorable for the growth of tares. In a good season the wheat overgrows and chokes the tares, but in a wet one the reverse is true. The farmers admit this, but still ask, Whence the seed of the tares? we "sowed good seed." To this it may be answered, The tare is a light grain, easily blown about by the wind; that birds carry and drop it over the fields; that myriads of ants drag it in all directions; that moles, and mice, and goats, and sheep, and other animals aid in the work of dispersion; that much of the tares shell out in handling grain in the field; that a large part is carried by the wind from the threshing-floors, which are always in the open country; that the heavy rains in autumn carry down to the lower levels the outcast zawân, and sow it there. It is my belief that in these and in similar ways the tares are actually sown, without the intervention of an enemy, and their presence is accounted for without having recourse to the incredible theory of transmutation.

Enough about tares. We are just entering the mouth of this profound gorge. It is called Wady el Hamâm, from the number of pigeons, "which fly as a cloud to their windows," in these rocks. Look up now to that cliff on the left. It is more than a thousand feet high, and a large part is absolutely perpendicular, and excavated by caverns, holes, and narrow passages, the chosen resort of robbers in former days. The walls and fortifications which united these caverns, and defended them against attack, are still visible. Kŭl'at Ibn Ma'an is the Arabic name of the place, but anciently it was called Arbela, from a village on the top, the ruins of which are now named Irbid. Josephus has a graphic description of the capture of the robbers in those caves by Herod the Great. After various expedients to expel them had failed, he let chests filled with soldiers down the face of the precipice, and landed them at the entrance of the caverns. This was a daring exploit, but it succeeded, and by fire and sword the robbers were entirely exterminated.

Josephus tell us that Herod was very anxious to save the lives of some of the robbers, but no one would listen to his proclamation, many preferring death to captivity. "Here a certain old man, the father of seven children, whose children, together with their mother, desired him to give them leave to go out, upon the assurance and right hand that was offered to them, slew them after the following manner: He ordered every one of them to go out, while he stood himself at the cave's mouth, and slew that son of his perpetually who went out. Herod was near enough to see this sight, and his bowels of compassion were moved at it, and stretched out his right hand to the old man, and besought him to spare his children; yet did not he relent at all upon what he said, but over and above reproached Herod on the lowness of his descent, and slew his wife as well as his children; and when he had thrown their dead bodies down the precipice, he at last threw himself down after them."[1]

Josephus himself afterwards fortified that place in preparation for the Roman war, but he does not appear to have made use of it.

Burckhardt visited these caves in 1812, and he was the first traveller of modern times who described them. Colonel Wilson, of the Palestine Exploration Fund, examined some of them. He says: "The cliffs on either side of the little stream rise almost perpendicularly to a height of about twelve hundred feet, and in their faces is the curious system of caverns sometimes called Kŭl'at Ibn Ma'an. Our visit was paid to those on the right, or southern, bank, a short distance below the ruins of Arbela (Irbid). After climbing up the steep side of the valley, we reached a flight of steps which led to the first tier of caverns: from this there was a circular staircase to a second row, and higher still were two other sets of chambers, inaccessible from below. We were for some time at a loss to find out how the inhabitants reached their homes, but after a good search found the remains of rock-hewn steps, which came down through a narrow cleft from the ground above.

"The caverns are of considerable extent, and those on the same level are connected by narrow passages cut in the face of the rock, the sides next the valley being protected by walls. The mouths of the caverns are closed with masonry, in which a number of basaltic stones brought from the plain below are used: the interiors appear to have been plastered, and there are recesses in their sides which may have been sleeping-places. The appearance of the masonry and other details gave us the impression that the caverns had been used by Christian communities after the robbers had disappeared, and reminded us strongly of similar establishments in the Mount of Temptation, near Jericho. As robbers' dens, the place is perfect: a sheer precipice, with only a few steps to give access to the caves, inaccessible, and perfectly safe from all attacks, except that one which Herod the Great so successfully employed."[1]

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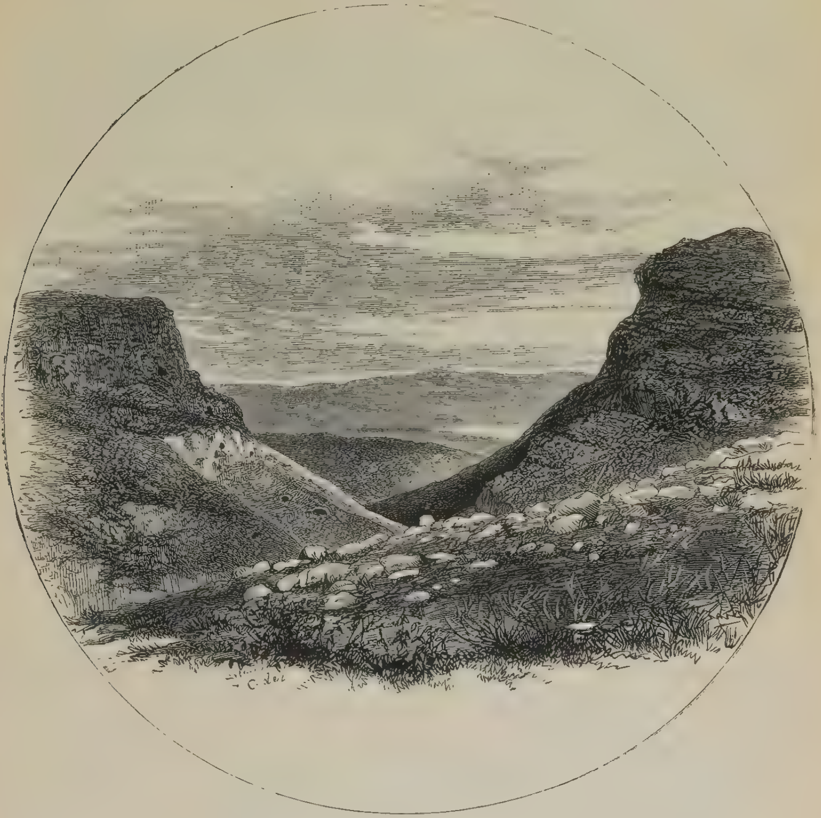
[1] B. J. i. xvi. 4; Ant. xiv. xv. 4, 5.



KŬL'AT IBN MA'AN—WADY EL HAMÂM.

This is truly a most surprising gorge, and there is nothing in this region which leads the traveller to expect such precipices.

The nature of the country above is yet more deceitful, and one is on the very edge of the awful cliffs overhanging Wady el Hamâm before he is aware of their existence. My first ascent through this stupendous gorge had to me all the excitement of a veritable discovery. I had not heard of it; and since then I never pass up this ravine without stopping again and again to gaze, admire, and almost shudder. But we have still a hard ascent to the top, and must no longer loiter here, looking up at those caverns. See these masses of limestone that have tumbled from those giddy heights, and nearly block up the wady. Some of them have fallen since I last came this way. Here is a fountain of delicious water, very refreshing to the thirsty traveller.

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[1] Rec. of Jer. pp. 275, 276.

This is indeed a fatiguing ascent; but, now that we have gained the summit, what a beautiful plain spreads out to the south and west! and those cone-like hills on the north-west must be the Horns of Hattîn.

They are; but we must turn to the left to examine the remains at Irbid, which lie in a depression a little farther south. They, no doubt, mark the site of Arbela, mentioned in 1 Maccabees ix. 2, and repeatedly by Josephus. As suggested by Dr. Robinson, Arbela may have been the Beth-arbel of Hosea x. 14, evidently a fortress which was spoiled by Shalman. "In the day of battle: the mother was dashed in pieces upon her children"—a form of expression which suggests these neighboring cliffs of Wady el Hamâm, down which the children and their mother may have been thrown by savage warriors.

The similar tragedy enacted here before the eyes of Herod, and those at Massada, and Gamala, and elsewhere, fully corroborate the intimations in the gospels regarding the inhabitants of this land in the time of Christ. The people of Nazareth present a case in point. Enraged at Jesus' reference to the widow of Sarepta, and to Naaman the Syrian leper, they "were filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong."[1] That conduct was in perfect keeping with what we know was the cruel and fierce fanaticism of the Galileans at that time. Josephus, in many passages of his works, represents them as a most turbulent and ferocious people, ever prone to riot and bloodshed.

Now that we have reached the ruins of Arbela, let us complete the account of that place; the ancient remains are considerable.

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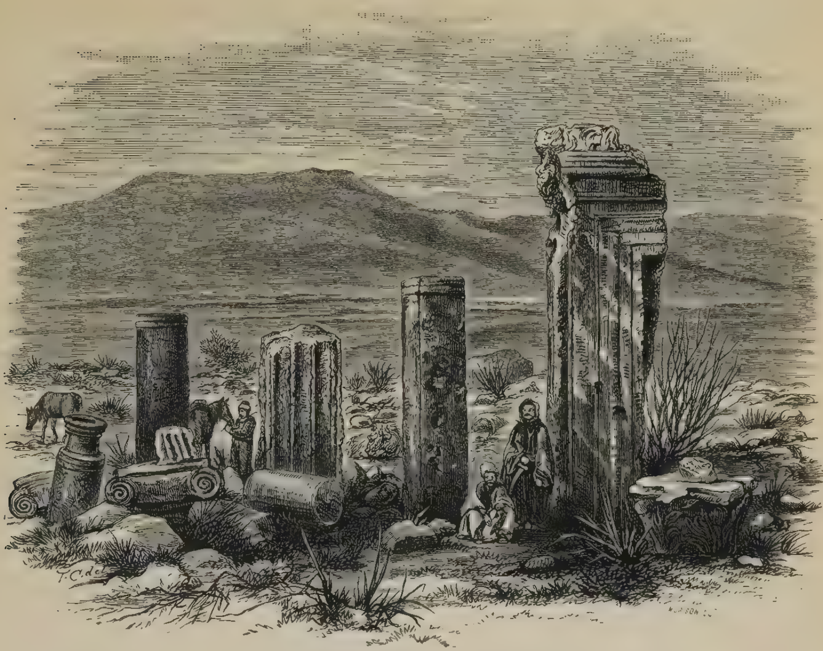
[1] Luke iv. 16–30.



IRBID, BETH-ARBEL—RUINS OF SYNAGOGUE.

The site of the city is a short distance southward from the top of Wady el Hamâm, and about two miles east of Kŭrûn Hattîn. To judge from the columns and prostrate remains, it must at one time have been a place of importance and of considerable wealth. Colonel Wilson says of it: "Part of the surrounding wall is standing; and there are two small pools, several cisterns, and the remains of numerous houses belonging to the old town, amongst which, easily discernible, are those of a later Arab village." The main ruins evidently belonged to a synagogue similar to those found in so many places in Upper Galilee, at Kedes, Tell Hûm, Khŭrâzeh, Kefr Bir'im, Meirôn, and elsewhere.

Colonel Wilson thus describes it: "The ground has been cut away to receive it; and, as this prevented the construction of an entrance at the southern end in the usual way, it was placed in the eastern side, where portions of two door-ways remain. The floor is sunk below the level of the ground, and is reached by a descent of three steps, two of which are continued round the northern end, forming benches, or seats. Several pedestals are *in situ.* This building has been at one time used as a mosque, the mihrab of which is perfect, and perhaps also as a church, if one may judge from the varied style of the capitals, Ionic, Corinthian, and others of a much later period being mixed up amidst the ruins in inextricable confusion."

Pursuing our journey, it will take half an hour to ride from Irbid açross this noble plateau to the foot of the southern "horn" of Hattîn. You observe, as we approach, that the entire hill, or tell, is an oblong mass of black basalt, extending north and south, having an elevation at each end. These elevations have a fancied resemblance to horns; and from them the name Kŭrûn Hattîn, the Horns of Hattîn, is derived. At some remote period the depression between the two horns may have been the crater of an active volcano, from which issued the lava that covers a large part of the plain below. Colonel Wilson discovered a cistern in the interior of the supposed crater; "and around the edge of the depression are the remains of walls," possibly of a fortress.

Kŭrûn Hattîn are supposed to be "the Mount of the Beatitudes," where Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount, are they not?

According to the Latin tradition. When I first passed through from Nazareth to Tiberias, I was taken to the very stone upon which the great Teacher was said to have been seated on that occasion. It lies on the south-eastern slope of the second horn. It is needless to say that there is not the slightest evidence in favor of its pretensions. The same remark applies with even more certainty to the earlier tradition of the Greeks, that the feeding of the five thousand took place on this mountain; though they will show you, on the ridge about an hour to the south-east, half a dozen stones, called Hejâr en Nŭsâra—Stones of the Christians—one of which the Latins have claimed as the "Mensa Christi."

These traditions are not older than the Crusades, and therefore have no intrinsic value. The mere fact that the Horns of Hattîn are upon a ridge, with a large plateau below them, proves nothing; for the lake is everywhere surrounded by mountains, and places well adapted for the scene of the Beatitudes and the miracle of the loaves and fishes are found at the north end of it, where Jesus ordinarily resided.

This southern horn rises only about one hundred feet above the plain, so that we will now ascend to the top in a few minutes; but on the north there is a precipitous descent of nearly seven hundred feet to the plain of Hattîn, and farther north a second descent to the level of the lake.

The outlook from the summit sweeps over regions vast and extremely varied.

It includes nearly all of Upper Galilee, from Tabor and Nazareth on the south, to the high hill of Safed on the north, and the much loftier Jermŭk, west of that city. To the east and north lie, far below, the green plain of Gennesaret and the blue Sea of Galilee, with mountain piled on mountain up to the heights of snow-capped Hermon in the far-away distance.

The village of Lûbieh is seen on the plain, some five miles to the south. I remember well the night I spent there forty-six years ago. We had loitered so long upon Tabor that the sun went down before we reached the village; and, not willing to make the long descent from there to Tiberias in the dark, we spent the night upon the open plain below Lûbieh, with no protection overhead from the chill air and dew but our umbrellas. We were serenaded by jackals; and their melancholy wail, then new to my ears, was anything but inspiring.

At el Lûbieh the last battle between Crusader and Saracen, the follower of the Cross and the upholder of the Crescent, began. It was midsummer—July 5th, 1187; and the Christian soldiers, already exhausted by fatigue and fainting from thirst, were defeated, and nearly all slain, by the fierce Saracens, under the skilful leadership of Saladin. The knights retreated to these heights of Hattîn, and, after repulsing three attacks of the Saracens, were themselves overpowered, and either fled or surrendered. Thus fell the Cross, the bishop, and the king; and thus terminated the rule of the Franks in the Holy Land, after a fitful sway of nigh a century. Michaud has given a minute account of the battle of Hattîn in his work on the Crusades, and Dr. Robinson a much more graphic one in the second volume of his "Researches."

The northern end of the kŭrûn is higher than the southern, and the descent from it is precipitous; we will, therefore, pass below it on the east side to the fountain near the village of Hattîn.

A Moslem wely is hidden away in the ravine which comes down from the northern end of the kŭrûn. It is called Neby Shû'eib, and is celebrated for the cure of insanity. Sheikh Yûsuf, of Mount Lebanon, was brought there several years ago; but the poor man, of course, derived no benefit from the long journey, the hard usage, and senseless ceremonies. That, however, will not deter others from making a similar pilgrimage to that saint's tomb. Failures a thousand times repeated apparently have no tendency to cure the sane even of their mania for miracles and miracle-working saints and shrines.

There seems to be nothing noteworthy about the village, except these hedges of cactus, certainly over twelve feet high.

They form impenetrable ramparts around many of the Galilean villages, which neither man nor beast will scale, and which fire cannot consume.

Our long détour northward from the village of Hattîn will bring us down to Wady er Rŭbŭdîyeh, so called from a ruin of that name in the valley above. The peasants we meet along our path are farmers belonging to el Mughâr, a village on the mountain some six miles farther to the west. They have come down here to work in their fields, which extend to the declivity immediately above the plain of Gennesaret.

Our farmers would think it hard to travel so far before they began the day's work.

And so would these, if they had it to do every day; but they drive their oxen before them, carry bed, bedding, and provisions, plough, yoke, and seed on their donkeys, and expect to remain out in the open country until their task is accomplished. The mildness of the climate enables them to do so without inconvenience.

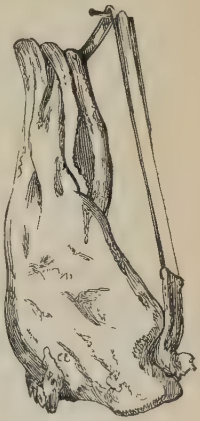
These men carry no cooking utensils, and we should think they had little or nothing to eat.

They, however, have a quantity of their thin, tough bread, a few olives, and perhaps a little cheese in that leathern bag which hangs from their shoulders—the "scrip" of the New Testament—

and with those they are contented. When hungry, they sit by the fountain, or the brook, and eat; if weary or sleepy, they throw around them their loose 'aba, and lie down on the ground as unconcernedly as the ox himself. At night they retire to a cave, a sheltering rock, or shady tree, kindle a fire of thorn-bushes, warm over it their stale bread; and, if they have shot a bird, they broil it on the coals, and thus dinner and supper in one are achieved with the least possible trouble. But the great luxury is smoking, and their whole evening is whiled away in whiffing tobacco and bandying rude jokes. The only thing they dread is an incursion of the Arabs and other robbers from beyond the lake, and to meet them they are armed as if going forth to war.

Do you suppose that this wallet, or bag, in which they carry their provisions, is the "scrip" which the apostles were directed not to take in their first missionary tours?[1]

No doubt; and it is the same "shepherd's bag" in which the young David put the "five smooth stones out of the brook."[2] All shepherds have a jârâb, as it is called, and it is the farmer's universal vade-mecum. They are made of the skins of kids stripped off whole, and tanned by a very simple process.



EL JÂRÂB—THE WALLET OR SCRIP.

The entire outfit of those first missionaries shows that they were plain farmers, shepherds, or fishermen; and to such men there was no extraordinary self-denial in the matter or the mode of their mission. We may explain the "charge" given to those primitive evangelists somewhat after the following manner: "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses; nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves."[3] You are going amongst your brethren in the neighboring villages, and the best way to get to their hearts and their confidence is to throw yourselves upon their hospitality. Nor was there any departure from the simple manners of the country in that.

At this day the farmers set out on excursions quite as extensive, without gold or even silver in their purses. Neither do they encumber themselves with two coats. They are accustomed to sleep in the garments they have on during the day, and in this climate such plain people experience no inconvenience from it. They wear coarse shoes, but never take two pairs of them; and although the staff is an invariable companion of all wayfarers, they are content with one. Of course, those instructions of Jesus can have only a general application to persons who go forth, not to neighbors of the same faith and nation, but to distant climes, and to heathen tribes, and under conditions wholly different from those of the fishermen of Galilee; but there are general principles involved or implied which should always be kept in mind by those who seek to carry the Gospel to the masses of mankind either at home or abroad.

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[1] Matt. x. 10; Mark vi. 8; Luke ix. 3. [2] 1 Sam. xvii. 40. [3] Matt. x. 9, 10.

Why do you suppose our Lord commanded the disciples to "salute no man by the way?"[1] This seems to be a departure from the general rule, to become all things to all men. Would it not appear very churlish and offensive to refuse the salâm even of a stranger?

It would; and I do not think that the prohibition extended that far; but the disciples were sent upon important and urgent business. They were ambassadors from their Lord and King, and were not to loiter by the way in idle conversation with friends whom they might chance to meet. The same is now required of special messengers. No doubt the customary salutations were formal and tedious, as they are now, particularly amongst Druses and other non-Christian sects, and consumed much valuable time. There is also such an amount of insincerity, flattery, and falsehood in the terms of salutation prescribed by etiquette in this land, that our Lord, who is Truth itself, desired his representatives to dispense with them as far as possible, perhaps tacitly to rebuke them.

Such instructions were also intended to reprove another propensity which an Oriental, whether Jew or Gentile, can scarcely resist, no matter how urgent his business. If he meets an acquaintance, he must stop and make an endless number of inquiries, and answer as many. If he comes upon men making a bargain or discussing any other matter, he must pause and intrude his own ideas, and enter keenly into the business, though it in nowise concerns him; and, more especially, an Oriental can never resist the temptation to assist where accounts are being settled or money counted out. The clink of coin has a positive fascination to him. Now the command of our Saviour strictly forbade all such loiterings. They would waste time, distract attention, and in many ways hinder the prompt and faithful discharge of their important mission.

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[1] Luke x. 4.

Upon the same principle he forbade them, saying, "Go not from house to house."[1] The reason is very obvious to one acquainted with Oriental customs. When a stranger arrives in a village or an encampment, the neighbors, one after another, usually invite him to eat with them. There is a strict etiquette about it, involving much ostentation and hypocrisy, and a failure in the due observance of such hospitality is frequently resented, and often leads to alienations and feuds amongst neighbors; it also consumes much time, causes distraction of mind, leads to levity, and in many ways counteracts the success of a spiritual mission. On these accounts the evangelists were to avoid those customs; they were sent, not to be honored and feasted, but to call men to repentance, prepare the way of the Lord, and proclaim that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. They were, therefore, first to seek a becoming habitation to lodge in, and there abide until their work in that city was accomplished.

The dimensions of the plain of Gennesaret, or el Ghuweir, as it is now called, are correct enough as given by Josephus, though it is a little longer than thirty, and not quite twenty furlongs in breadth. It is semicircular in form, and extremely well watered. The streams from 'Ain es Serâr and 'Ain el Hamâm, far up that wady, irrigate the south-western part of it by means of canals. 'Ain el Mudauwarah, below us on the east, waters that portion lying between it and the lake. It was for a long time supposed to be the fountain of Capharnaum, referred to by Josephus. Canon Tristram and Lieutenant Kitchner, of the Palestine Exploration Fund, saw "numbers of the Coracinus" mentioned by the Jewish historian, "and other fish, swimming in it."

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[1] Luke x. 7.

Dr. Robinson correctly describes 'Ain el Mudauwarah as "enclosed by a low wall of mason-work of hewn stones, forming an oval reservoir more than fifty [actually ninety-six] feet in diameter; the water is perhaps two feet deep [over three feet in winter], beautifully limpid and sweet, bubbling up and flowing out rapidly in a large stream, to water the plain below. Numerous small fish were sporting in the basin, which is so thickly surrounded by trees and brushwood that a stranger would be apt to pass by without noticing it."[1]

The stream from Wady er Rŭbŭdîyeh is the largest, having nearly three times the volume of 'Ain el Mudauwarah, and about twice that of Wady el Hamâm. It drains a large district to the west, and, on reaching the plain, is carried to the north and south for the purpose of irrigation. Canals from er Rŭbŭdîyeh, says Dr. Merrill, of the American Palestine Exploration Society, bring down water to within a few yards of 'Ain el Mudauwarah on the north. Towards the north-west, the winter torrent from Wady el 'Amûd comes down from the mountainous region about and west of Safed, and crosses the plain to the lake.

'Ain et Tîny is the most northern fountain of the plain, but so low and so near to the lake—on the shore, in fact—that it could not have been extensively used. That portion of the plain is not so well watered as the southern, and the stream from 'Ain et Tâbighah appears to have been brought into that region to supply the deficiency. In the summer-time all the streams which enter the plain disappear before they reach the lake. I once rode along the margin of the water from el Mejdel to 'Ain et Tîny, and was often obliged to wade in the lake to get round the small points of land covered with brush; but no brook, at that season, entered it from the plain. The entire plain could be irrigated by the streams and fountains that pass through, or take their rise within, its limits. This was doubtless done in ancient times, and hence the extraordinary fertility which was formerly ascribed to it.

Josephus thus boasts of the fertility of Gennesaret: "Its nature is wonderful as well as its beauty. Its soil is so fruitful that all sorts of trees can grow upon it, and the inhabitants, accordingly, plant all sorts of trees there; for the temper of the air is so well mixed that it agrees very well with those several sorts; particularly walnuts, which require the coldest air, flourish there in vast plenty. One may call this the ambition of Nature, where it forces those plants that are naturally enemies to one another to agree together. It is a happy contention of the seasons, as if every one of them laid claim to this country; for it not only nourishes different sorts of autumnal fruits beyond men's expectation, but preserves them also a great while. It supplies men with the principal fruits: with grapes and figs continually during ten months of the year, and the rest of the fruits, as they become ripe, through the whole year; for, besides the good temperature of the air, it is also watered from a most fertile fountain. The people of the country call it Capharnaum. Some have thought it to be a vein of the Nile, because it produces the Coracin fish, as well as that lake does which is near Alexandria."[1]

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[1] Rob. Res. vol. ii. p. 400.

This extract shows at least the "ambition" of the historian to magnify his own country; but it is very interesting, as a vivid contrast between what this part of the country was eighteen centuries ago and what it is now. The soil may be as good as ever, and the climate the same; but where are the walnuts, the figs, the olives, the grapes, and the other fruits coming on in their season the year round? Alas! all gone. The canal, too, from the fountain of Capharnaum is broken; and there are no inhabitants to restore it, and to cultivate this "ambition of Nature."

Gennesaret is now pre-eminently fruitful in thorns. They grow up amongst the grain, or the grain amongst them; and the reaper must pick the "harvest even out of the thorns," as Job says "the hungry" shall do with that of the foolish, "and the robber swallow up their substance."[2]

Do you suppose that Job refers to gleaning out that which grows thus amongst thorns, and so this threat would imply that the robbers would make thorough work of it, and leave nothing behind them, not even that which grew amongst the thorns?

There is another explanation possible. The farmers, after they have threshed out the grain, frequently lay it aside in the chaff in some place near the floor, and cover it up with thorn-bushes to keep it from being carried away or eaten by animals. Robbers who found and seized this would literally take it from amongst thorns; and the disappointment to the "foolish" would be aggravated by the reflection that he had gathered his crop and threshed it, and needed only a windy day to make it ready for storing in his granary. The farmers in this region all need the exhortation of Jeremiah "to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns."[1] They are too apt to neglect this; and the thorns, springing up, choke the seed, so that it cannot come to maturity.

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[1] B. J. iii. 10, 8.

[2] Job v. 5.

Leaving Wady er Rŭbŭdîyeh, our course must now be across the country towards the north-east, to reach Khân Minyeh, at the north-west corner of the lake. Though there is no well-defined road for much of the way, we shall encounter no great difficulty from that cause; and by keeping along the western side, and round the northern end of the plain, we shall avoid the thistles and thorny bushes that encumber much of the central part of it.

On my way from Tiberias to Safed, many years ago, I found, near the middle of the plain, a great quantity of petrified cane and wood, which a recent flood from Wady er Rŭbŭdîyeh had uncovered and scattered far and wide over the surface. I loaded a mule with specimens, but most of them soon crumbled to dust.

The region above us on our left, though cut up with deep ravines, is yet well adapted for cultivation, and may have been once thickly inhabited.

There are now, however, very few villages for several miles in that direction. That hamlet on the hill above the plain west of our path is Yâkûk, and it may possibly occupy the site of Hukkok, assigned to Naphtali.[2]

The bushes and small pine-trees along this northern end of the plain are stuffed full of birds' nests, like those we saw before reaching Mukhâlid, between Cæsarea and Jaffa. The birds in this region settle in colonies, and here these low pine-bushes are the breeding-place of thousands of field-sparrows. We shall meet them again on the plain of the Hûleh.

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[1] Jer. iv. 3.

[2] Josh. xix. 34.

It was not far from this neighborhood that Jesus gave that touching testimony regarding his poverty: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."[1]

Yes; and it is amongst the striking corroborations of the Gospel narratives in this land that we have seen the fox run to his hole, and the numberless nests of these "birds of the air," just where reference to both would have been most natural. There are other incidental allusions in the eighth chapter of Matthew which this morning's ride and our present position enable us to comprehend and confirm. Jesus came "down from the mountain," where he had delivered the "Sermon," and "entered into Capernaum." We also have descended from the traditionary Mount of the Beatitudes, and are in search of the site of that place. True, we have seen no leper, as he did, probably because there were no inhabitants at all along our route; but lepers are common in this country, as we well know. There is now no Roman centurion "under authority" here to intercede for his "servant sick of the palsy;" but we are soon to see the probable ruins of the synagogue at Tell Hûm which that benevolent officer erected for the Jewish people whom he loved.

"Jesus gave commandment to depart unto the other side," that is, to the eastern shore of the lake; and they landed in "the country of the Gergesenes;" and there, at the mouth of Wady es Semak, is the site of Gergesa, which we lately visited. Near it is the "steep place" down which the swine, possessed by a legion of devils, may possibly have rushed "into the sea, and perished in the waters." The lake, now so quiet and bright, we know can suddenly be lashed into wild rage by "a great tempest," insomuch that any "ship" would be "covered with the waves."

These are only a few of the coincidences between what is related in the Gospel narratives and our own experience; but we have reached the tents, pitched at 'Ain et Tîny, "by the sea of Galilee," where "Jesus walked."

We will rest here for a while, and after lunch ride along the shore of the lake to where the Jordan enters it from the north.

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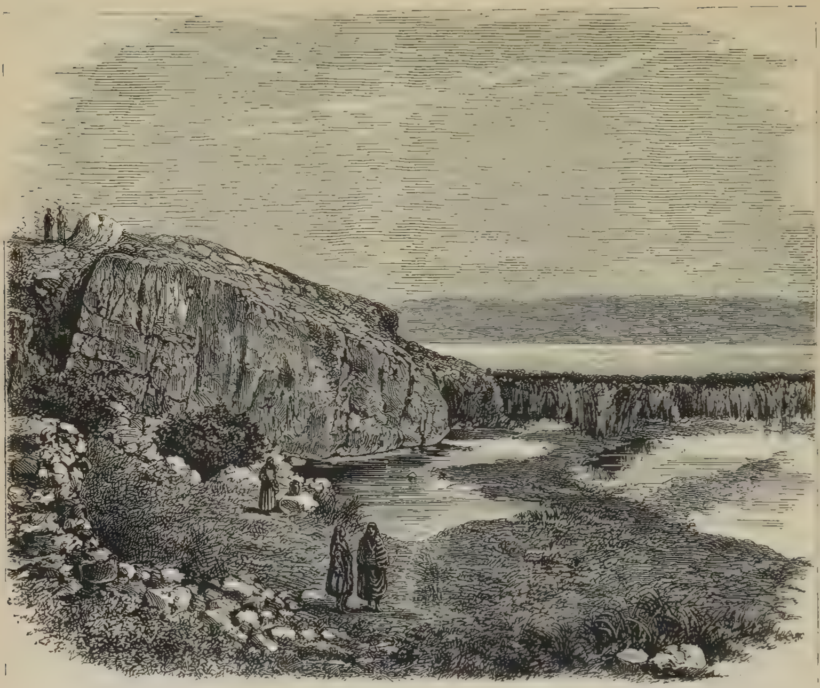
[1] Matt. viii. 20; Luke ix. 58.



'AÏN ET TÎNY, NEAR KHÂN MINYEH.

Does this Fountain of the Fig take its name from those fig-bushes growing in the cliff above and about it?

Probably from some venerable tree of which they are the modern representatives. The stream bubbles up from under the rocks close to the cliff, and runs immediately into the lake, whose surface is almost on a level with the fountain-head. Near the shore is a considerable marsh, with a luxuriant growth of the papyrus-plant. We will see thousands of them, with their feathery tufts waving in the breeze, along the margin of Lake Merom.

The bold bluff above the fountain, with its artificial tell, was evidently once crowned by a castle, or guard-house, built, I suppose, to command the highway from Damascus to Egypt. Khân Minyeh, that dilapidated modern ruin by the roadside, was constructed, like Khân et Tujjâr and others, for the accommodation of caravans. It is now occasionally occupied by a few Arabs.

We have a most interesting ride this afternoon. I know not where else so much of deep religious interest is concentrated in so small a space as around the north-western end of this lake. There was Capernaum, where our blessed Lord resided during most of his active ministry amongst men; and Chorazin, of saddest doom; and "Bethsaida, the city of Philip, Andrew and Peter;" besides other places of historic importance.[1] Let us study them one by one, and so carefully that the impressions made by our visit to their probable sites may ever remain fresh and vivid.

I have long anticipated the pleasure of this ride, and have many questions to ask concerning those disputed sites. To begin at the beginning: What was the object of this canal, cut in the solid rock of the cliff above 'Ain et Tîny, and through which our path leads?

It has brought us round, as you see, to the pretty little bay and green vale of 'Ain et Tâbighah, where large fountains pour their abundant waters into the lake. In former times the stream from those fountains was carried round the edge of this little cove into that rock-cut canal, in the bed of which is the present road. The purpose was to irrigate a portion of the northern part of the plain of Gennesaret.

It has taken us fifteen minutes to ride from 'Ain et Tîny to these fountains of et Tâbighah.

Colonel Wilson has given a detailed account of the fountains, the aqueduct, and the rock-cut canal. He says: "Westward along the shore of the lake, a mile and a half from Tel Hûm, is the charming little bay of et Tâbighah, and the great spring which is, without a doubt, the fountain of Capharnaum, mentioned by Josephus as watering the plain of Gennesareth. The bay is about half a mile across, and on its western side is shut in by the cliff of Khân Minyeh, the only place at which the shore of the lake cannot be followed. There is a small tract of fertile land, but we could find no ruins except those connected with the mills or water-works.

"There are five fountains, all more or less brackish, and varying in temperature from seventy-three and a half to eighty-six and a half degrees. Four are small; but the one mentioned above is by far the largest spring in Galilee, and was estimated to be more than half the size of the celebrated source of the Jordan at Banias. It rises to the surface with great force, at a temperature of eighty-six and a half degrees, which can hardly be considered warm in such a climate as that of the lake district. Most of the water now runs to waste, producing a quantity of rank, luxuriant vegetation; but some of it is collected in a small reservoir, and is thence carried off by an aqueduct to a mill owned by a man of Safed, the only one in working order of five that were built by the great chieftain Dhâher el 'Aṃr. The mills are small towers, with two circular shafts, to the top of which the water is brought by aqueducts, and then, falling down, turns the machinery at the bottom.

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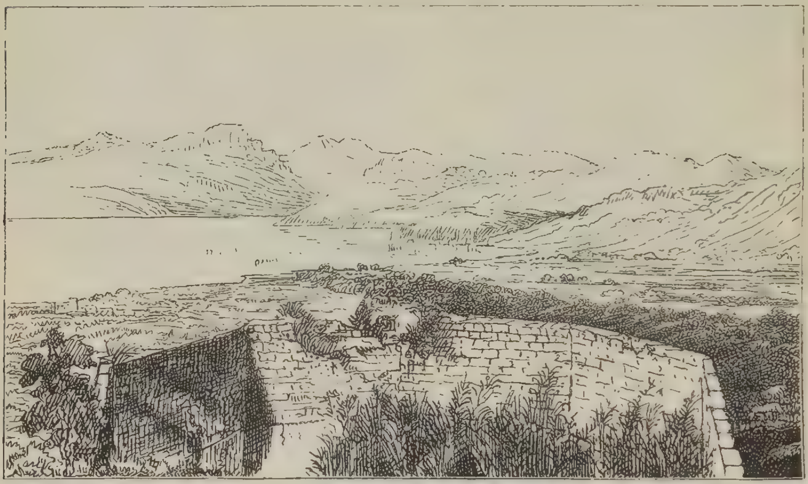
[1] John i. 44.



'AIN ET TÂBIGHAH—BIRKET 'ALY EDH DHÂHER.[1]

"Connected with this fountain are the remains of some remarkable works which at one time raised its waters to a higher level, and conveyed them bodily into the plain of Gennesareth for the purposes of irrigation. The source is enclosed in an octagonal reservoir of great strength, by means of which the water was raised about twenty feet to the level of an aqueduct that ran along the side of the hill. Strong as the reservoir was, the water has at last broken through it; and there is now little more than two feet left at the bottom, in which a number of small fish may be seen playing about.

[1] From a sketch by Captain A. C. Hamilton, R. E.

"After leaving the reservoir, the aqueduct can be traced at intervals following the contour of the ground to the point where it crossed the beds of two watercourses on arches, of which the piers may still be seen; it then turns down towards the lake, and runs along the hill-side on the top of a massive retaining wall, of which fifty or sixty yards remain, and lastly passes round the Khân Minyeh cliff by a remarkable excavation in the solid rock which has been noticed by all travellers. The elevation of the aqueduct at this point is sufficient to have enabled the water brought by it to irrigate the whole plain of Gennesareth; and, though we could only trace it for a few hundred yards inland, it was not improbably carried right round the head of the plain: the same causes which have almost obliterated it in the small plain of Tâbighah would fully account for its disappearance in Gennesareth."[1]

Lieutenant Kitchner adds: "Round the southern brow of this hill [above 'Ain et Tîny], where the rock runs steeply down to the lake, is the rock-cut aqueduct now used as a road, and described by Major Wilson. It is fifty-two feet four inches above the sea, which is almost perpendicularly beneath it at one part, and has a fall of seven feet in the mile: the water would not have been carried far on the plain, but would have watered the gardens round Khurbet Minyeh."

"Half a mile farther along the coast is the pleasant Bay of Tâbighah, where there are several small and one very large spring which turns several mills. The water is brackish. The 'Ain is enclosed by walls of masonry, forming an octagon twenty-six feet side; by this means the water was raised to the required height, and carried by the aqueduct to the plain. Considerable remains of the masonry of the aqueduct leading to the rock-cut portion, and a small piece beyond, with the watercourse coated with thick cement, still remains."

"The height of the top of the reservoir is fifty-one feet above the sea; thus it would require very little more to carry the water over the rock-cut portion of the aqueduct. I was informed by the people that this reservoir was built by Dhâher el 'Amr, and it is now called Birket 'Aly edh Dhâher. It was probably repaired by him when building the mills around it; the lower portion appears to be older, and is built of better-dressed stone, coated with cement. The whole structure is of basalt."

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[1] Rec. of Jer. pp. 271–272.

"Josephus describes the fountain called Capharnaum as watering the plain, and that some thought it to be a vein of the Nile, owing to its containing the fish called coracinus. This description evidently alluded to 'Ain et Tâbighah. The coracinus was not observed in the 'Ain. The reservoir is nearly full of reeds, and the water is not clear, so that it is impossible to see the bottom where those fish occur; other fish were seen, and I was convinced there was no reason why the coracinus should not be there."

There can be no reasonable doubt that 'Ain et Tâbighah is the fountain which Josephus calls Capharnaum, and probably the fish—coracinus—mentioned by him are still found there.

Our next point is Tell Hûm, which you suppose occupies the site of Capernaum. Is it not somewhat strange, if this be the fountain of Capharnaum, that the stream from it was not carried to that city, but was taken westward to the plain of Gennesaret?

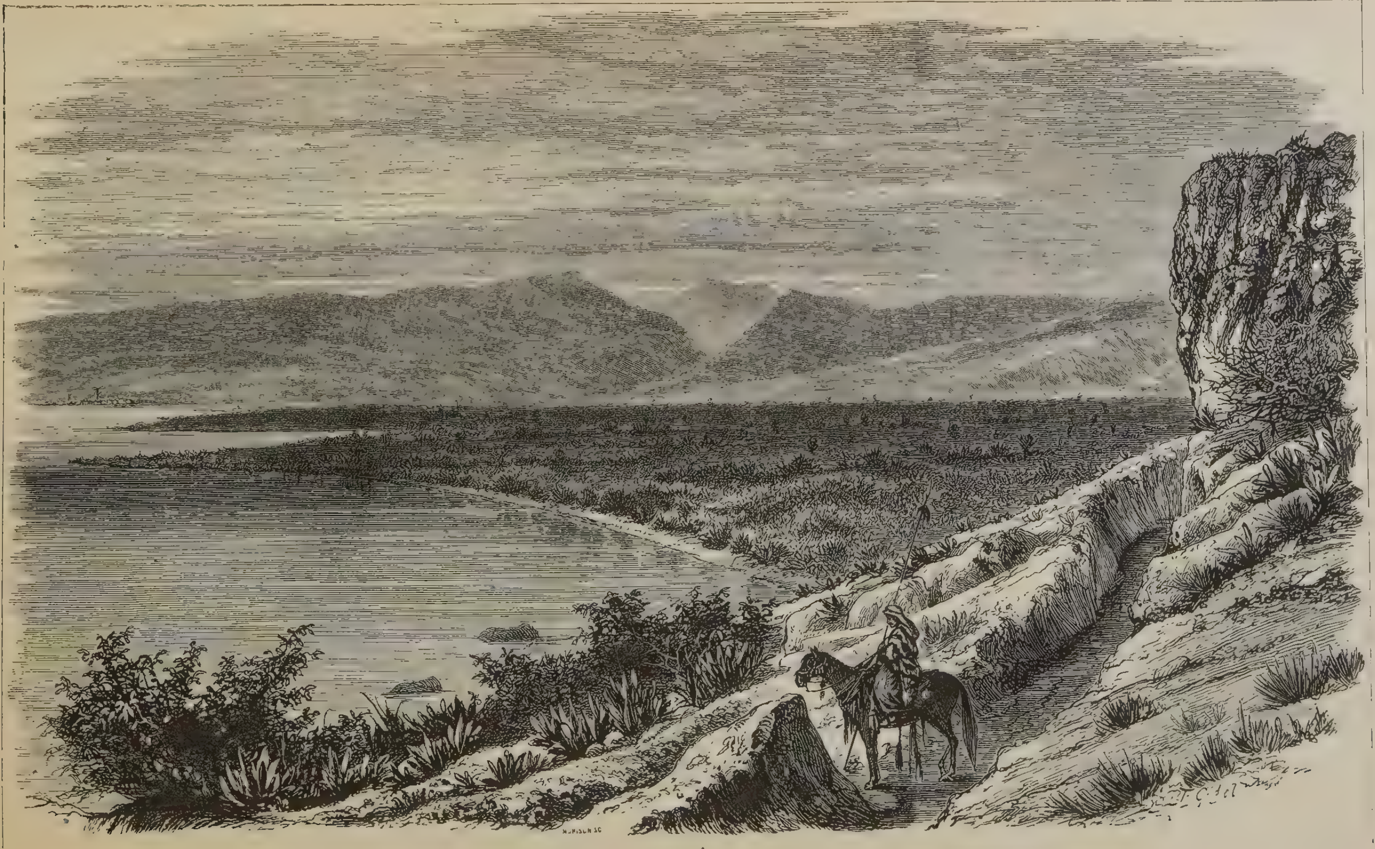
The explanation may be that the water was not fit to drink, and there probably was no land requiring irrigation there; while the plain of Gennesaret needed just such a source of fertility.

Then why call it the fountain of that city?

It is evident from the existing remains at Tell Hûm that the town situated there was the largest and most important on the north side of the lake, between et Tâbighah and the Jordan, and therefore may have given the fountain its name, a practice not uncommon in this country.

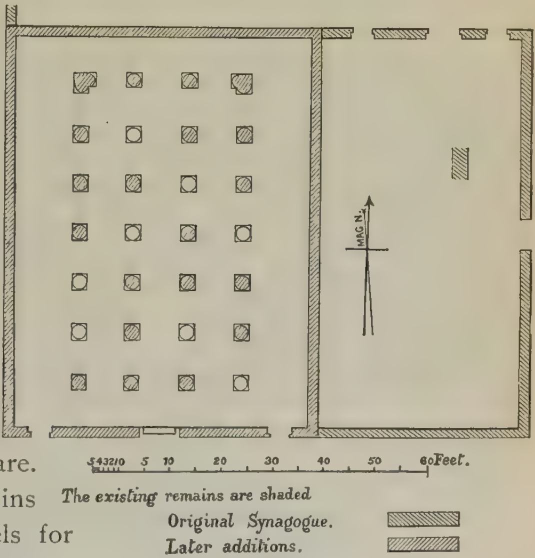
It is half an hour farther north to Tell Hûm, and the path leads over heaps of lava bowlders, which encumber the shore and the fields. These Arabs seem never to leave this shore, for I always find just such an exposé of semi-black, semi-naked men and boys to stare at me; and here and there an occasional fisherman casting his net into the sea, frequently plunging in himself after it.

Traces of old buildings extend nearly all the way from 'Ain et Tâbighah to Tell Hûm. But here we are amongst the thorns and thistles which encumber its ruins, and render the examination of them not a little embarrassing.



ROCK-CUT CANAL ABOVE 'AIN ET TÎNY.—THE PLAIN OF GENNESARET.

The shapeless remains lying in utter confusion extend up the hill northward for a considerable distance, and are much more interesting and striking than any others on this part of the lake. With two exceptions, the houses were all built of basalt, quite black, and very compact. Like all such ruins, the stones were rudely cut, but, like them also, they are well preserved, and will remain so for ages. The limestone for the synagogue was cut from the mountains yonder to the north-west, where it is seen in place, and very abundant; and that edifice was of the same date as those of Kedes, Kefr Bir'im, Meirôn, and other places in Galilee; the work, however, is more massive, and in a higher style than at any of the above-named places. The site of this edifice is now more exposed than when I was here many years ago, and more columns, entablatures, cornices, and other fragments are laid bare. The Arabs pile up the ruins into a few rickety hovels for themselves and their cattle; but in 1848 there was not a human being in sight, and very probably he who visits this place next spring will find it equally solitary.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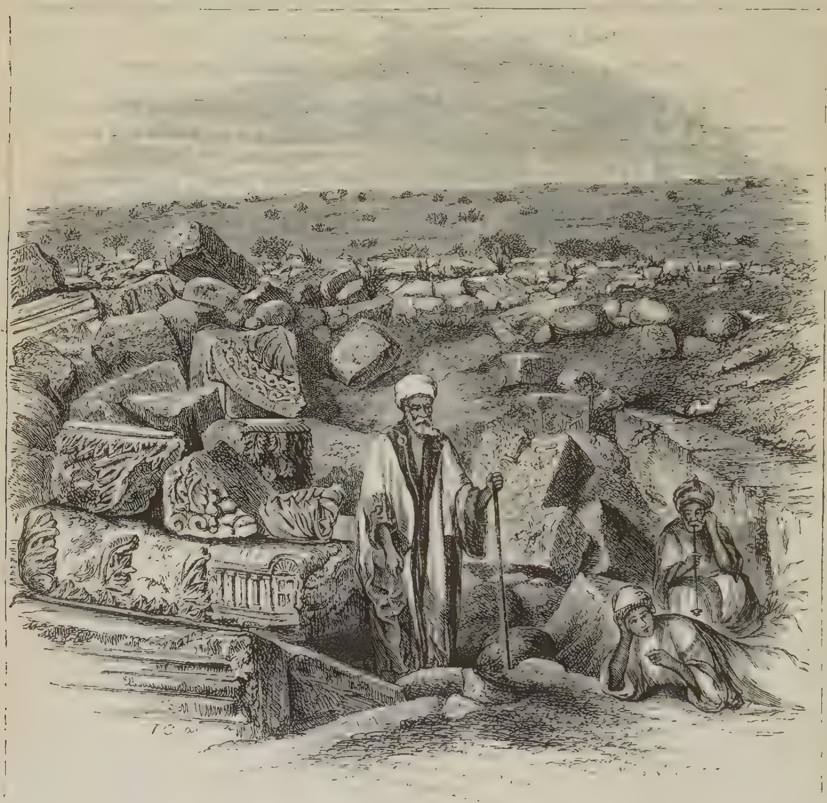
The existing remains are shaded
Original Synagogue. ▧
Later additions. ▨

PLAN OF THE SYNAGOGUE AT TELL HÛM.

Careful measurements made by Colonel Wilson, after having uncovered the site, show that the synagogue was seventy-four feet nine inches long by fifty-six feet nine inches wide, and the walls were nearly ten feet thick. It had on the south side three entrances. "It appears to have been rather better finished" than any other synagogue in Upper Galilee, "and to have been ornamented much more profusely. The exterior was decorated with pilasters, the only instance met with in this class of building."

The interior was "divided into five aisles by four rows of columns." There were twenty-eight of them, two feet four inches in diameter, with Corinthian capitals; "and the fillet round the neck has a pretty rope moulding. A number of slabs with different floral ornaments were found, which appeared to have formed part of a frieze," and also "several portions of a heavy cornice of a peculiar shape, which may have run above the frieze. On one lintel is what appears to be the pot of manna, and on either side of it something like a reed, which may possibly be Aaron's rod."



RUINS OF THE SYNAGOGUE AT TELL HÛM.

Outside of the synagogue, but connected with it, are some traces of a building which may indicate the site of the church said to have been erected here as a Basilica, to enclose the house of Peter. "It consists of a rectangular building, having three entrances on the north side, and one on the east, and the exterior was ornamented with pilasters similar to those on the synagogue. There is no door-way connecting the two buildings, and the walls meet with a straight joint, those of the latter addition abutting on and hiding the corner pilasters of the original construction. During the excavations a portion of a curious slab was found, on which is represented the face of some large building, possibly a synagogue. The front, as here shown, has ten columns, or pilasters, with Ionic capitals set on a plinth course. Two of the pilasters form the jambs of the door, which has a circular head and ornament, like those found entire at Kerazeh, and in fragments at Irbid and Tell Hûm. The door is slightly open, and is panelled. The entablature which runs above the columns is carried round the arch of the door. Mixed with the débris were found several remains of a much later date, which may have been added, if the synagogue was ever used as a church. There are no traces of a mihrab, or of its ever having been turned into a mosque."

There is good reason to believe that these remains are on the site of the very synagogue erected by that "certain centurion" in whose behalf "the elders of the Jews besought Jesus instantly, saying, That he was worthy: for he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue." And apparently he was a worthy man, at whom even the Saviour "marvelled, and said, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."[1] And as it was the constant custom of our Lord to teach and preach in the synagogues of the villages he visited, we may be sure that his blessed voice was often heard in the one here in "his own city." Indeed, it is expressly stated that the marvellous discourse recorded in the sixth chapter of John was uttered "in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum."[2]

In this connection, Colonel Wilson remarks: "If Tel Hûm be Capernaum, this is, without a doubt, the synagogue built by the Roman centurion (Luke vii. 4, 5), and one of the most sacred places on earth. It was in this building that our Lord gave the well-known discourse in John vi.; and it was not without a certain strange feeling that, on turning over a block [in the ruins], we found the pot of manna engraved on its face, and remembered the words, 'I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.'"[1]

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[1] Luke vii. 1–10.

[2] John vi. 59.

The more one is able to realize the scenes and incidents which must have occurred here more than eighteen hundred years ago, the deeper grows the sacred interest which gathers about the solitary site of our Lord's "own city," as it is called in Matthew ix. 1. It is almost superfluous to notice the fact that Capernaum was on the border of the lake, and therefore the expression "exalted unto heaven," applied to it in Matthew xi. 23, can have no reference to relative elevation, as some have imagined.[2]

How luxuriantly everything grows about this melancholy site! These formidable thickets of nettles are the largest, sharpest, and most obstinate we have yet encountered. If they are the nettles mentioned in Job xxx. 7, 8, under which those "children of fools, viler than the earth," were accustomed to gather and bray like asses, I do not envy them their shelter.

The word in the Hebrew text is chârûl; and the objection of critics to rendering it nettles, that the bush is too small, cannot apply to these, for a large number of mocking children might find shelter beneath them. They reach to and sting one's face, even when on horseback; and those grinning urchins we passed in coming down to the ruins were actually overshadowed by a dense thicket of nettles and thorns. I believe, therefore, that chârûl is rightly rendered nettle in the Bible, not only in Job, but elsewhere, as in Proverbs xxiv. 31, and in Zephaniah ii. 9. The latter is singularly appropriate, not only to these ruins of Capernaum, but to all such sites eminently "the breeding [place] of nettles, and a perpetual desolation." Nothing is more common than to find the remains of ancient cities and temples overgrown with nettles.

And now, escaped from this critical and personal tangle, I call your attention to those magnificent oleanders. Nowhere else will you see them in greater profusion than in the region around the head of this lake. I have seen clusters of them here twenty feet

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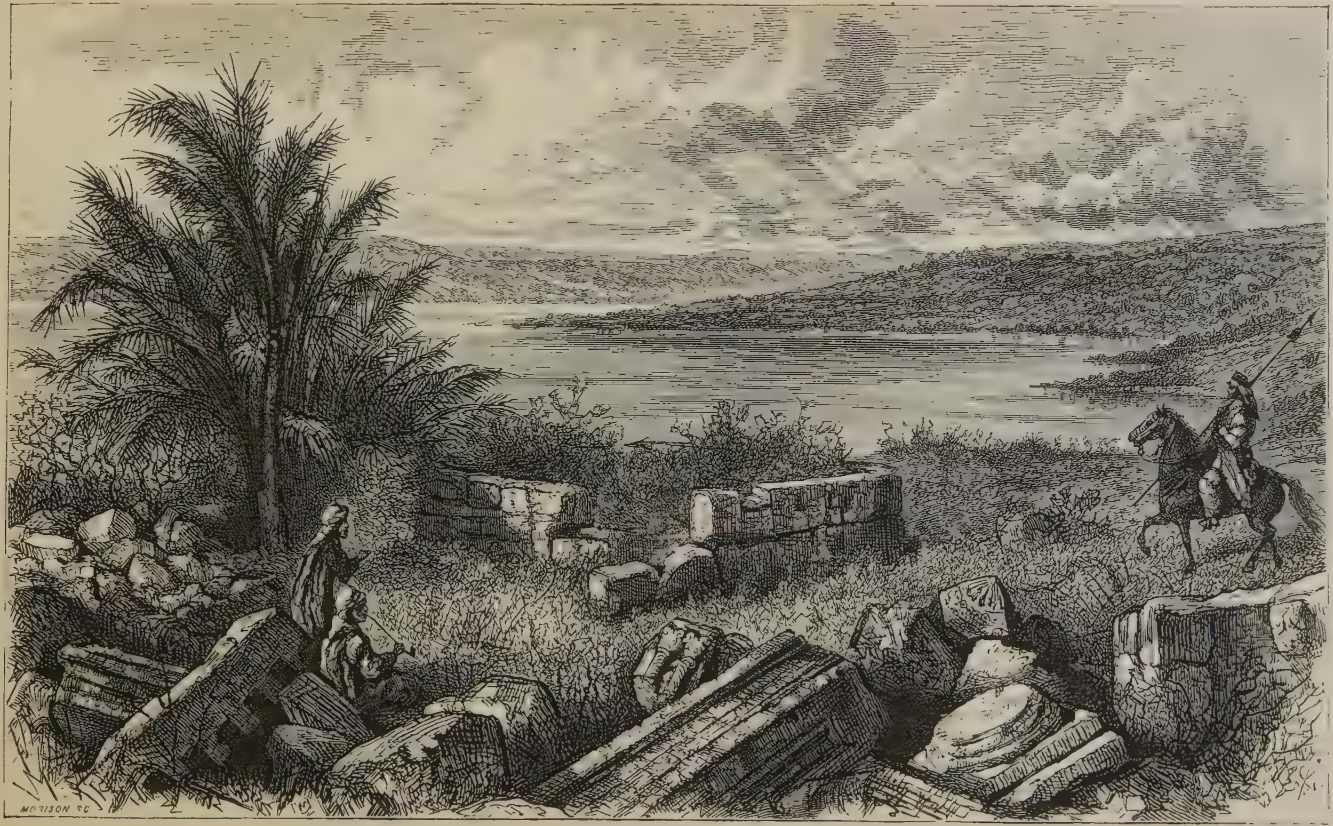
[1] Rec. of Jer. p. 269.

[2] Matt. xi. 20–25.



TELL HÛM—CAPERNAUM.

high, and a hundred in circumference, one mass of rosy-red flowers—a pyramid of exquisite beauty; and

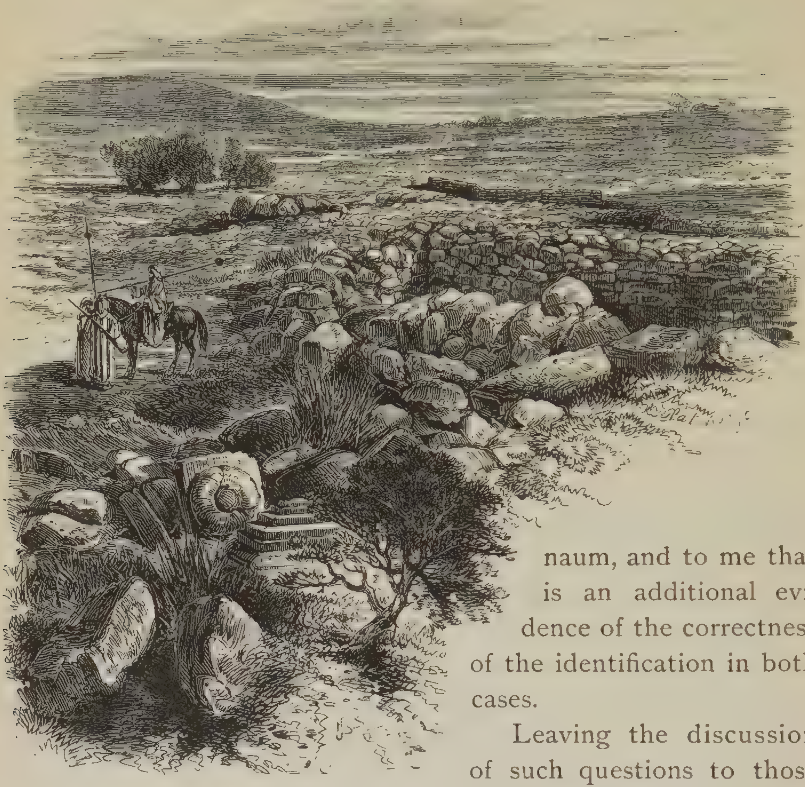
> All through the summer night
> Those blossoms, red and bright,
> Their leafy breasts expose unheeding to the breeze.

We will now make our way across this Wady Nâshif, as I hear it called by the Bedawîn, though, according to the custom of the land, it is also named Wady Tell Hûm here, and Wady Kherâzeh higher up. It runs directly down to the lake on the east side of Tell Hûm, and Kherâzeh lies over against us in that side valley which joins Wady Nâshif below. We may as well walk over these basaltic bowlders, and each one take care of himself and his horse as best he can. The distance is about two and a half miles.

And here we are amongst the shapeless heaps of Kherâzeh, which attest most impressively the fulfilment of that prophetic imprecation of the Son of God upon Chorazin. The ruins, mostly on the hill-side, east of the deep ravine, but extending down into it, spread over a surface quite as large as those of Tell Hûm. Here are the remains of a synagogue, built of hard dark lava, with columns and capitals of the same material. They are curious and unique in this part of Palestine, though such columns abound on the east of the Jordan. The walls of the ordinary houses were made of the same lava, like those at Tell Hûm; but, from some cause or other, they have not been so entirely overthrown. Some are still several feet high and two feet thick, with low doors and very small windows.

All who have visited this site will remember the small fountain in the midst of the ruins, with its overshadowing tree, both most welcome to the weary wayfarer in this dry and thirsty land.

I have scarcely a doubt about the correctness of the identification, although Dr. Robinson rejects it, almost with contempt. The name Kherâzeh is nearly the same as Chorazin; the situation—two miles north of Tell Hûm—is where we might expect to find it; the ruins are quite adequate to answer the demands of the Gospel narratives; and, apparently, there is no rival site. The location of Chorazin at this place favors the claim of Tell Hûm to be Caper-



KHERÂZEH—CHORAZIN.

naum, and to me that is an additional evidence of the correctness of the identification in both cases.

Leaving the discussion of such questions to those who have leisure and learning, we will turn down to the south-east over this vast field of black basalt, to visit the supposed site of Bethsaida. Chorazin and Bethsaida fell under the same woe, and both were long lost to the student and traveller. I am still in doubt as to the actual location of the latter. The name is now generally applied, in maps, to a tell a short distance up the Jordan, on the east side; but the only ruins of importance are below, along the foot of the hills bordering the vale of the Jordan, and at its débouchure on the west side. When I was there in 1855, the Bedawîn in the Batîhah applied the name el Mes'adîyeh to the ruins of a village not far from the eastern bank of the river, and near the shore of the lake, distinguished by a few palm-trees, foundations of old walls, and fragments of basaltic columns. In some modern maps that site is called Bethsaida. Doubtless the city of Andrew and Peter derived its name from the occupation of fishing, and it is nearly certain that it was located on the shore, and not several miles from it, at the tell to which the name is now affixed.

These remains of ancient buildings on the west side of the river mark that part of Bethsaida which was, as I suppose, on the west bank of the Jordan, and, of course, in Galilee, while those on the east belong to the part which Philip repaired and called Julias. We shall come amongst them after crossing the river, which we might do on the sand-bar along the margin of the lake; but I prefer the ford above, where the bottom is less marshy.

It was in this neighborhood that Josephus fought the Romans under Sylla; concerning which battle he says, with his usual vanity, "And I had performed great things that day, if a certain fate had not been my hinderance; for the horse which I rode, and upon whose back I fought, fell into a quagmire, and threw me on the ground, and I was bruised on my wrist, and carried into a village named Cepharnome, or Capernaum."[1]

This paragraph is not only curious in itself, but it favors the idea that Capernaum was at Tell Hûm, and that it was then only a village. But turn up to the margin of this marsh along the foot of the hill, or you will encounter that certain fate which hindered Josephus from doing great exploits against Sylla. These black, spongy places are treacherous to the last degree, as David appears to have found by sad experience; for he speaks of sinking in deep mire to which there was no bottom. It is a curious fact that, dry, rocky, and mountainous as this country is, yet it abounds in bogs and quagmires to an extraordinary extent. The rivers of Damascus all subside into vast swamps: the Orontes creeps through them from Ribla to Antioch. The Jordan does the same from Dan to Lake Merom. The Kishon and the N'amân find their way to the Bay of Acre through bottomless marshes, and so does the Zerka, or Crocodile River at Cæsarea, the Abu Zabûra, the Kanah, the Fâlik, and the 'Aujeh, between that city and Jaffa. David was, therefore, perfectly familiar with such deceitful and dangerous places, and could speak of them from personal experience.[2]

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[1] Vita, § 72.

[2] Psa. lxix. 2, 14.

Again we meet the mire-loving buffaloes, and they seem as fond of the mud as the very swine.

They are, and when they cannot find a marsh they bathe in pure water. I once ascended Olympus above Brusa, and near the very top buffaloes were lying in a pool of ice-water, collected from the surrounding snow-banks, and they appeared to enjoy that cold bath as much as these do this black marsh.

Here we are at the ford, and though the water is not deep, the bottom is rocky. And now we have before us the fertile but rather muddy plain of el Batîhah, extending down the north-eastern shore of the lake for two hours. Dr. Robinson says correctly that it resembles Gennesaret—the one on the north-west, and the other along the north-east shore of the lake, both well watered and extremely fertile, and both very unhealthy. The Batîhah has the most permanent brooks, Gennesaret the most numerous and largest fountains. I can confirm the statement of Burckhardt that the Arabs of el Batîhah have the earliest cucumbers and melons in all this region. I once visited it in early spring with a guide from Safed, who came, according to custom, to load his mules with those vegetables for the market in that town.

And that is the lodge, I suppose, which Isaiah speaks of; just such a frail, temporary thing suggested that sad complaint of the prophet, "The daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers."[1]

No doubt; but the true point of the comparison will not appear until the crop is over, and the lodge forsaken by the keeper. Then the poles fall down, or lean at all angles, and the green boughs with which it is shaded will be scattered by the wind, leaving only a ragged, sprawling wreck, an emphatic type of utter desolation.

Job had seen the same thing many ages before Isaiah. Concerning "the hope of the hypocrite, when God taketh away his soul," he says: "He buildeth his house as a moth, and as a booth that the keeper maketh."[2]

Both references to house and booth as types of frailty are natural. The moth weaves its feeble sheath in the garment it is corrupting, where it is soon discovered and easily crushed; the watch-man, set over the vineyards, erects his frail booth of bushes, which can only maintain a precarious existence for a brief space, is soon forsaken, and then quickly thrown down and scattered by the wind.

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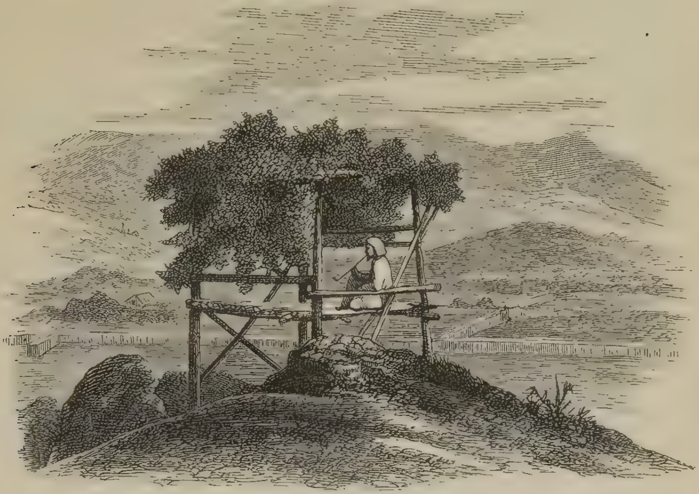
[1] Isa. i. 8.

[2] Job xxvii. 8, 18.



LODGE IN A GARDEN OF CUCUMBERS.

So it is with the portion of the wicked, and the fate of the rich: "A tempest stealeth him away in the night. The east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth: and as a storm hurleth him out of his place."[1]

I notice that the custom of setting up scarecrows in gardens is resorted to by these poor peasants.

This is a very ancient device. In the Apocrypha one of the most contemptuous references to idols that can be found in all antiquity is based upon it: "For as a scarecrow in a garden of cucumbers keepeth nothing, so are the gods of wood laid over with silver and gold."[2]

But that is not exactly "according to the Scriptures," is it?

Well, Baruch says so, and he, you know, is a very Biblical character—the scribe of Jeremiah; but no matter by whom first uttered, the comparison is sufficiently pertinent to have been amongst the wise sayings of Solomon himself, or the divinely inspired denunciations of Isaiah. It is a curious fact that, although these hideous figures are occasionally stationed in vineyards and cornfields, yet the cucumber gardens seem to be their appropriate place. Baruch implies that they are useless, and keep nothing; and, though this agrees with the experience of the natives, the custom prevails to this day.

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[1] Job xxvii. 20, 21.

[2] Baruch vi. 70.

What are they expected to keep, or, rather, keep away?

Foxes, jackals, wild-boars, and other animals of pilfering instincts, that greatly abound in this uninhabited region. Here we are at the tell which has been identified with Bethsaida. I can get no name for it; but if your guide, or dragoman, knew which you wanted, he would call it Tell Julias or Tell Beit Saida, or Tell What's-his-name, as the sheikh did, whom 'Akil Aga appointed to guide me hither many years ago.

If this is the Julias which Philip built, and named in honor of the daughter of Cæsar, it was certainly no great compliment.

And yet Josephus says "he advanced the village Bethsaida, situate at the Lake of Gennesareth, unto the dignity of a city, both by the number of inhabitants it contained, and its other grandeur, and called it by the name of Julias," of which grandeur, however, nothing now remains but these heaps of unmeaning rubbish.[1] The Jewish historian is not to be trusted in such matters. I have visited all the cities which Philip is said to have built, and there neither is, nor could have been, much of royal magnificence about them. This is a fair specimen; and though Soganâ and Seleucia were somewhat larger, they could never have been anything more than agricultural villages. I suppose Philip repaired and enlarged that part of Bethsaida east of the Jordan in order to detach it from Galilee, and to secure the rich plain of el Batîhah which appertained to it.

It is high time we were on our way back to the tents at 'Ain et Tîny, for the road will not be safe after dark either for man or beast.

What can be more impressive? A quiet ride along the head of this sacred sea! The blessed feet of Immanuel have hallowed every mile of the way, and the eye of divine love has gazed a thousand times upon this fair expanse of lake and land. It is surpassingly beautiful at this evening hour. The western hills stretch their lengthening shadows about it, as a loving mother drops the sheltering curtains round the cradle of her sleeping babe. Cold must be the heart that throbs not with unwonted emotion. Son of God and Saviour of the world! with thee my thankful spirit seeks communion here on the threshold of thine earthly home. All things remind me of thy presence and thy love.

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[1] Ant. xviii. ii. 1.

There's nothing bright above, below,
From flowers that bloom to stars that glow,
But in its light my soul can see
Some feature of thy Deity.

God, manifest in the flesh, selected the lovely shore of this lake for his dwelling-place, and sanctified it by his mighty miracles and deeds of divine mercy. Most sweet is it at this calm and meditative hour,

For twilight best
Becomes even scenes the loveliest.

There is something spirituel here in the coming on of evening,

While round the couch of nature falling,
Gently the night's soft curtains close.

The devout McCheyne has described in beautiful and appropriate language this sacred lake and its hallowed associations:

How pleasant to me thy deep blue wave,
O sea of Galilee!
For the glorious One who came to save
Hath often stood by thee.
Fair are the lakes in the land I love,
Where pine and heather grow,
But thou hast loveliness above
What nature can bestow.
It is not that the wild gazelle
Comes down to drink thy tide,
But He that was pierced to save from hell
Oft wandered by thy side.
Graceful around thee the mountains meet,
Thou calm reposing sea;
But ah! far more, the beautiful feet
Of Jesus walked o'er thee.
Those days are past—Bethsaida where?
Chorazin, where art thou?
His tent the wild Arab pitches there,
The wild reeds shade thy brow.
Tell me, ye mouldering fragments, tell,
Was the Saviour's city here?
Lifted to heaven, has it sank to hell,
With none to shed a tear?
O Saviour! gone to God's right hand,
Yet the same Saviour still,
Graved on thy heart is this lovely strand,
And every fragrant hill.—McCheyne.

May 19th. Evening.

There are questions of special interest connected with the topography of this part of the Lake of Tiberias. Let us devote the evening to their consideration, for I feel more than usual interest in the inquiry about the home of our Lord. Is it certain that Tell Hûm marks the site of Capernaum? We know where the angel appeared unto Mary—where Jesus was born—where he spent nearly thirty years of his life before he commenced his public ministry—where he closed that ministry in death; and we know, also, from what place he ascended on high after his resurrection from the dead; but we do not know, and we long to find, where that home was where he resided while he manifested to men on earth the glory of the only-begotten Son of God.

There is at this day no occasion to enter upon those inquiries which fix the site of Capernaum at some spot near the head of this lake, for of that there can now be no doubt, and there are but two places whose claims are earnestly discussed: Khân Minyeh, not far from our tents here at 'Ain et Tîny, and Tell Hûm. Dr. Robinson has very learnedly argued in favor of the former, and I am slow to dissent from the conclusions of such a man on a question of topography which he has so thoroughly studied. But he has not convinced me. I believe the doctor fails in his main argument. He endeavors to prove that 'Ain et Tîny is the fountain of Capharnaum. Now what do we know about this fountain? Nothing but what is learned from Josephus. Will his description of it apply to 'Ain et Tîny? I think not.

In accounting for the fertility of the plain of Gennesaret, the Jewish historian says it was watered by a most fertilizing fountain, called Capharnaum. Dr. Robinson admits that "the lake when full sets up nearly or quite to the fountain" of 'Ain et Tîny. It comes out almost on a level with the lake and close to it, so that it could not be made to irrigate the plain; and, moreover, if it were to be elevated high enough, there is not sufficient water now to make it worth while, especially in the season of the year when irrigation is needed. The doctor, aware that 'Ain et Tîny could not water the plain, translates *most potable* fountain, and supposes that Josephus was not thinking of *irrigation*, but of water to *drink*. He is, however, alone in this rendering. No translator of Josephus has thus made him speak of water to drink, when he is stating the reasons for the unparalleled *fertility* of a *plain*. The conclusion is irresistible that 'Ain et Tîny is not the fountain of Capharnaum.

His argument for 'Ain et Tîny, drawn from the account in Josephus about the Nile and the fish coracinus, is equally untenable. We may admit that this fish was found in the fountain of Capharnaum, but that is no evidence that 'Ain et Tîny was that fountain. Certain kinds of fish delight to come out of the lakes and rivers in cold weather to those fountains that are tepid and slightly brackish, and they do so at more than one such fountain along the shores of this lake; but 'Ain et Tîny has none of those qualities to attract them. The springs of Tâbighah meet the specification of Josephus as to quantity and quality. They are at the head of the lake, and sufficiently copious to irrigate the plain. The ruined reservoir by which the water was collected, and elevated to the proper height to flow along the canal, is still there; and the canal itself can be traced quite round the cliff to the plain. I believe that there, in fact, is the fountain of Capharnaum. It is a fountain that would attract to it the fish from the lake, and the coracinus may yet be found there.

If not the site of Capernaum, what, then, was Khân Minyeh?

I suppose it to have been an important government station, including a custom-house, with the offices and residences necessary for those in charge, with warehouses for storage, a khân, or caravansary, and also a guard-house for the protection of the main road from Tiberias northward to Damascus. These edifices would account for the ruins in the vicinity, and for those on the summit of the hill above Khân Minyeh.

The place was probably inhabited almost exclusively by a Roman garrison, the custom-house officers and their servants, with whose families the Jews could not associate without contracting ceremonial defilement. Is it possible or credible that so devout a Jew as Simon Peter would have selected such a place for his residence? There would be no call for a synagogue at Khân Minyeh, since no pious Hebrew community would reside there; and Jesus himself could not have chosen a government station, with its officers and soldiers, and its attendant noise and confusion, for a quiet home in "his own city."

It may be assumed, therefore, that "the receipt of custom" from whence Matthew was called, and the house where "Jesus sat at meat," were at Khân Minyeh, and not at Capernaum. The Gospel narratives do not necessarily imply that either the one or the other was in the city where Jesus lived and taught.[1] Neither the evangelists nor Josephus locate Capernaum within the plain of Gennesaret; and, moreover, in the various accounts of the feeding of the five thousand, given in Matthew xiv., Mark vi., Luke ix., and John vi., they have mentioned Capernaum and Bethsaida in such connections and relations as to admit of an explanation in entire accordance with the supposition that Tell Hûm marks the site of Capernaum.

I attach great weight to the name Tell Hûm. Hûm is the last syllable of the word Capernaum, and it is a very common mode of curtailing old names to retain only the final syllable. Thus we have Zîb for Achzib, and Fîk for Aphek, etc. In this instance, Kefr has been changed to Tell: why it is not difficult to comprehend. When Capernaum became a heap of rubbish, it would be quite natural for the Arabs to drop the Kefr, and call it simply Tell Hûm; and this I believe they did. The ruins there are abundantly adequate to answer all the demands of her history. And, in that connection, it seems to me that much importance should be attached to native tradition in this case. So far as I can discover, the tradition of the Arabs and the Jews fixes Capernaum at Tell Hûm, and, I believe, correctly.

How do you account for the prevalence of fevers at Capernaum? for it was there, of course, that "Peter's wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever."[2]

Fevers are still prevalent in this region, particularly in summer and autumn, owing to the extreme heat acting upon the marshy plains, like that of el Batîhah, at the influx of the Jordan.

It may have been in the neighborhood of Tell Hûm that our Lord was so pressed by the multitudes who flocked from all parts to hear him, that he was obliged to enter a ship and have it thrust out a little from the shore, that from thence he might address them without interruption; and I was delighted to find small inlets between this and the tell, where the "ship" could ride in safety only a few feet from the shore, and where the multitudes, seated on both sides, and before the boat, could listen without fatigue.

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[1] Matt. ix. 1–13; Mark ii. 1–17; Luke v. 16–32.

[2] Matt. viii. 14.

As if on purpose to furnish seats, the shore on both sides of those narrow inlets is piled up with smooth bowlders of basalt. Somewhere there, also, "Peter and Andrew" were "casting a net into the sea," when our Lord, passing by, called them to follow him, and become fishers of men. And probably in one of those inlets "James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother," were "mending their nets," when they, being also called, "immediately left the ship, and their father, and followed" Jesus.[1] In this neighborhood that organization began which has since spread over the earth, and revolutionized the world. Viewed in that relation, is there a region on earth that can rival this in interest?

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[1] Matt. iv. 18–22.

XII.

'AIN ET TÎNY TO BÂNIÂS.

Healing of the Paralytic.—Oriental Houses.—The Jaulân, Gaulanitis.—Sujân.—Shaik.—Summakah.—Joaiza.—Camp of Emîr el Fŭdle.—Slaves of the Emîr.—Eliezer of Damascus.—Bedawîn Steward.—Gathering of the Flocks.—Dogs of the Bedawîn.—The Man of Uz.—Drought by Day, and Frost by Night.—Volcanic Mounts in the Jaulân.—The Jaulân given up to Pasturage.—The Good Shepherd.—Kefr Neffakh.—Turkmân Camp.—Selukia.—Oak Woods.—Game in the Jaulân.—Kuneitirah.—Sâhm Jaulân, Golan.—Khŭrbet Saida.—Encampment of Sheikh Fareij.—Bedawîn Robbers.—Spear in front of the Sheikh's Tent.—Spear and Cruse at Saul's Bolster.—Bedawîn Bride and her Outfit.—Evening with Sheikh Fareij.—The Inn of the Pit of Joseph.—Burckhardt.—The Tears of Jacob.—The Pit of Joseph.—Jacob and his Family.—Lieutenant Kitchner's Description of the Mukâm of Jacob's Daughters.—Volcanic Centres.—Origin of the Depression of the Jordan Valley.—Ridge between Hermon and Lebanon.—Obtrusion of Trap-rock in the Hûleh.—Upheaval South of the Dead Sea.—No Physical Change since Abraham.—Bridge of Jacob's Daughters.—Khân and Fountain.—Saul of Tarsus.—Crusading Castle.—The Jordan from the Hûleh to Lake Tiberias.—Plain of the Hûleh.—Shore of the Lake.—Game on the Hûleh.—The Pelican of the Wilderness.—The Papyrus.—Thistles and Wild Mustard.—Artificial Mounds.—'Ain el Mellâhah.—Fish in the Pool.—Marsh of the Hûleh.—Personal Incident.—Rooks and Crows.—Nests of Field-sparrows.—Camp of el Ghawârineh.—Making Butter.—Wringing the Nose.—"Consider the Lilies."—The Hûleh Lily.—Jisr el Ghŭjar and Nahr el Hasbâny.—Tell el Kâdy, Laish, Dan.—The Jordan rising from a Crater.—Dean Stanley's Description of Dan.—Sheikh Daraik.—Hebrew Dan, and Arabic Kâdy.—The Jordan Emblematic of Life.—Passage of the Jordan by the Hebrews.—Buffaloes.—The Behemoth.—The Land of Uz.—The Family of Aram.—Hûleh, Hul.—Geshur, Gether.—Maacah, the Mother of Absalom.—Meis el Jebel, Mash.—Reem and Unicorn.—Urus.—Pharaoh's Lean Kine.—Junction of the Branches of the Jordan.—Difneh, Daphne.—The Golden Calf.—Fertility of the Hûleh.—Abundance of Bees.—Sealed Storehouses.—Seîyed Yehuda, Judah upon Jordan.—Tell el Kâdy to Bâniâs.—Oak Woods.—Cæsarea Philippi.—Panium.—Fountain of the Jordan.

May 20th.

BEFORE we pass away from this neighborhood, I have one more topic to consider. It was at Capernaum that the paralytic, borne by four of his friends to the top of the house, was "let down" from the roof "with his couch into the midst before Jesus." I wish to ask whether there is anything in the construction of modern native dwellings that can explain how that could have been accomplished without damage to the house or its occupants.

The account of that remarkable act of faith is recorded more in detail by Mark and Luke.[1] The friends of the "one sick of the palsy" are said not only to have "uncovered the roof," but "they had broken it up." In order to make the method adopted on that occasion more intelligible, we must banish from our minds every form of European or American house. Those of Capernaum, as is evident from the ruins in this neighborhood, were, I suppose, like those in modern villages, low, with flat roofs easily reached by a stairway from the yard, or court. Jesus probably stood in the open lewân, which, as you know, is the reception-room, between two others, and has an open arch in front, instead of a wall with doors and windows; or he may have taken his stand in the covered court in front of the house itself, which usually has open arches on three sides, and the crowd were around and in front of him, "and the power of the Lord was present to heal them."

Those who carried the paralytic, not being able to "come nigh unto him for the press," ascended to the roof, removed so much of it as was necessary, and let down their patient through the aperture. Examine one of these houses, and you will see that the thing is natural, and easy to be accomplished. The roof is only a few feet above the floor, and by stooping down, and holding the corners of the couch—merely a thickly-padded quilt, like those used at present in this region—the sick man could have been let down without any ropes or cords. And this, I suppose, was done. The whole was the extemporaneous device of plain peasants, accustomed to open the roofs of their houses, and let down grain, straw, and other articles, as they still do in this country.

The only difficulty in this explanation is to understand how they could break up the roof without sending down such a shower of dust as to incommode our Lord and those around him. I have seen roofs thus opened on Lebanon, and there was always more dust than is agreeable; but dust and earth are not dangerous.

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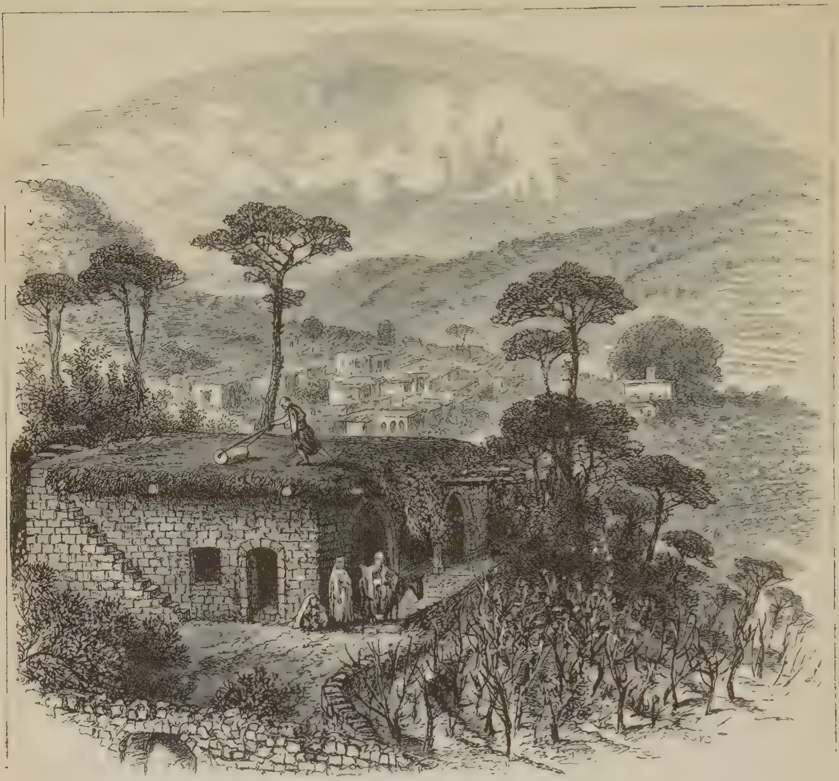
[1] Mark ii. 1–12; Luke v. 18–26.



NATIVE HOUSE ON LEBANON.

The materials now employed in the construction of roofs are beams placed about three feet apart, across which short sticks are arranged close together, and covered with a thickly-matted thorn-bush called bellân. Over this is spread a coat of stiff mortar, and above that marl or earth. Now it is easy to remove any part without injuring the rest. No objection, therefore, would be made on this score by the owners of the house. They had merely to scrape back the earth from a portion of the roof over the lewân, or court, take up the thorns and short sticks, and let down the couch between the beams at the very feet of Jesus. The end achieved, they could speedily restore the roof as it was before.

Now we must begin our long day's ride. The muleteers, with the tents and baggage, go direct to Bâniâs; but we will cross over the mountain to Jisr Benât Ya'kôb, and then follow the west bank of the Jordan, the shore of Lake Hûleh, and the great marsh north of it, round to Tell el Kâdy, and from there to Bâniâs.

This programme, including Dan, the northern limit of the Hebrew inheritance, promises to be doubly interesting. My chief regret on leaving this memorable Sea of Galilee is that we did not complete the entire circuit of the lake by passing down the plain of the Batîhah, and along the eastern shore to Wady es Semak, which we visited from Tiberias.

There is nothing of special interest on that plain, and we have seen the places of importance along the shore, so that you have not lost much, if anything. While traversing the desolate region between 'Ain et Tîny and Jisr Benât Ya'kôb, I will give you a description of my wanderings in the Jaulân, the ancient Gaulanitis, east of the Jordan and the lakes Hûleh and Tiberias. I have repeatedly passed through different portions of that houseless wilderness of bleak lava, from the foot of Hermon southward to the valley of the Jarmuk. There is not a single inhabited village along the route which I followed, and even the camps of the Bedawîn and Kurds were few and far between.

Was the region traversed by you in the Jaulân ever possessed by the children of Israel?

The territory was given by Moses to the half tribe of Manasseh, but the city of Golan was assigned to the Levites.[1] It is, therefore, quite possible that some of the ancient sites now found scattered through the Jaulân may have been amongst the cities either subdued or built by that tribe. Golan itself has not yet been identified. But to return to my description.

With a pleasant party of friends I started from Bâniâs, on the morning of February 28th, to visit first the ruins at Seîd Yeyeda. After examining those interesting remains, we ascended the basaltic hills south-eastward for more than an hour to Sujân. That part of the country was once well cultivated, as is evident from the broken-down terraces along the sides of the mountain; but at present it is absolutely deserted by all except lawless Bedawîn. The view from Sujân over the Hûleh and the surrounding regions is magnificent, and I imagine that one great attraction of the place was its cool and healthy atmosphere.

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[1] Deut. iii. 13; iv. 43.

From Sujân we wandered upward and eastward over vast fields of lava, without road, or even path, for more than an hour, to Skaik. It is one of the largest ruins in the Jaulân, and was better built than most cities of that region. The aneroid marks two thousand six hundred and seventy feet above the sea for the elevation of this site, and we found the air cold and bracing. Skaik was inhabited until recent times, and celebrated as the general rendezvous and point of departure for caravans to the east and south. The existing remains of cisterns and caravanserais show that ample provision had been made for the accommodation of trading companies.

Half an hour south-west from Skaik is an ancient ruin, called Summakah. This word seems to contain the elements of Samochonitis, the Greek name for the Hûleh, given to it by Josephus.[1] Whatever was the origin and relation of the name, the position of the place is beautiful; and it is supplied with a fine spring of water, flowing out from the base of the hill. Half an hour farther south are ruins called Joaiza; and there we encamped for the night, near the tents of the Emîr Hussein el Fŭdle, the chief of all the Bedawîn in that part of the Jaulân. He was a young man of quiet manners and modest deportment, of few words, but sincere and truthful—all remarkable exceptions in his race and station. He traces his pedigree back to Muhammed, and the sheikhs and emîrs of the Jaulân kiss his hand in acknowledgment of his superior rank and lineal descent. We were received with great respect; coffee was roasted, and a sheep brought up, slaughtered, and quickly cooked before our tent, and the customary extemporaneous feast spread for us in the presence of the emîr. Though he did not literally run to the herd and "fetch a calf" himself, others did at his bidding; and the whole proceeding reminded me of the patriarch Abraham most vividly.[2] Like this emîr, he dwelt in tents, and his dependents were encamped about him with their flocks.

There were not more than thirty tents at this encampment; and, upon inquiry, I found, to my surprise, that the people were nearly all the slaves of the emîr. They and their ancestors had belonged to his family for so many generations that all trace of their real origin was lost. Their complexion, also, had softened into the bronze of the genuine Arab, and the negro features were almost obliterated. The true Bedawîn, however, never intermarry with them, though the villagers and artisans who come amongst them occasionally do. They are the property of the emîr in a restricted sense, and so are the flocks and herds which they are permitted to hold; and he does not hesitate to take what he wants, nor can they refuse his demands, whatever they may be. But then custom, or law, or both, forbids him to sell them.

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[1] Ant. v. 5, 1; B. J. iii. 10, 7; iv. 1, 1.

[2] Gen. xviii. 7.

I inquired particularly into these matters the next day, as we rode through the country under the protection and guidance of the emîr's head-servant, or steward, who occupied the same position in his master's family that "Eliezer of Damascus" did in that of Abraham. In answer to my question, he exclaimed, in indignant surprise, "Sell us! *Istugfar Allah*—God forbid!" They were, in fact, the home-born servants of the old house of el Fŭdle; and, like the three hundred and eighteen in Abraham's family, they were his warriors in times of need, which, in one way or another, happens almost daily. They seemed to be attached to the emîr, or, rather, perhaps, to his family name, rank, power, and honor. Their own honor, safety, and influence all depended upon him. I was surprised to find that the emîr was entirely governed by his own slave. He does nothing of himself; and this modern Eliezer not only disposed of his master's goods, but managed affairs very much as he pleased. All the Arabs of the Hûleh and Jaulân greatly feared and courted this chief servant. He was shrewd, efficient, and sometimes cruel; nor was any man's life safe if its owner became obnoxious to D'auk. Other matters about that encampment of genuine Ishmaelites were equally interesting.

In the evening the flocks began to concentrate around Joaiza from every part of the surrounding desert. It was a noisy, lively, and really unique scene. The young kids, lambs, calves, and donkeys, that had been kept pent up during the day, now let out from the folds, rushed, bleating and braying, in every direction, seeking their dams. They were finally shut in, and everything in the camp became quiet except the dogs. They kept up an incessant and angry barking all night long; and I understood that there were supposed to be robbers lurking about, who, but for those watchful sentinels, would carry off lambs, and even camels, from the outskirts of the encampment.

The dogs of the Bedawîn are extremely fierce, and it is not a little dangerous to come upon an encampment in the night. They are an indispensable part of the shepherd's possessions, and appear to have been so even in the time of Job.

Is not the Jaulân supposed to be the country of Job?

It is more probable that he resided in the region east of the Jaulân. If he were there now, he might find the same kind of enemies to plunder and kill, and even natural phenomena very similar to the fire that burnt up his sheep, and the mighty wind from the wilderness that overturned the houses of his children. Destructive fires now sometimes sweep over that region, and angry hurricanes hurl to the ground the habitations of man. I would not, however, bring the patient man of Uz down to a level with modern Bedawîn emîrs. He was an agriculturist as well as a shepherd; an honest man, and not a robber; one that feared God and eschewed evil, and not a fanatical follower of a false prophet.

Though the mid-day sun had been uncomfortably hot, the night air at Joaiza was keen and cold; indeed, there was a sharp frost, and ice appeared on all the little pools about the camp. Jacob had experience of such alternations between blazing sun and biting frost. "In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes," was the indignant reply to his avaricious father-in-law.[1] In the present case, the cold was owing mainly to the elevation of the Jaulân—not less, on an average, than two thousand five hundred feet above the sea. It is a grand volcanic plateau, comparatively level, but with a line of singular Tellûl running from Hermon southward to the Jarmuk. The first is Tell el Ahmar, south of Lake Phiala. Three miles south of this is Tell esh Sheikha, then Tell Bŭrm, next the great double Tell Aramein—the north peak called Aram, and the south Abu Nudy. About four miles farther south is Tell Abu Yûsûf, and next it Tell el Khanzîr. Tell el Farus is the last and the loftiest of the list.

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[1] Gen. xxxi. 40.

Few persons, I presume, ever ride over the hills of Galilee without admiring those tall cone-shaped landmarks on the eastern side of the Jordan which overlook the Jaulân, and wishing to know their names and character. To such, at least, the above list will be of some service; and the only additional statement I have to make in regard to them is that, though, seen at such a great distance, they appear small, they are really rough volcanic mounts, some of them over three thousand feet high. Beyond them eastward stretch the vast and fertile plains of the Haurân, which are now, and always have been, the granary of Central Syria and Northern Arabia. The Jaulân, however, is now entirely given up to pasturage; and, from the nature of the soil and climate, it will continue to be so, although there are places which might be cultivated with any kind of grain, and orchards would flourish almost everywhere. It is well watered in all parts, except the region between the Lakes Phiala and Tiberias. There the fountains and streams dry up early in spring, and the weary traveller must carry his water-bottle with him.

We started early next morning, with a letter and guide from the emîr to Sheikh Fareij, whose camp was somewhere, about a day's journey, in the desert southward of Joaiza. In that general direction our guide led us across endless fields of lava, and most of the time without any road that I could see, or my horse either. We crossed many tracks, however, which led down to the Hûleh, to Jisr Benât Ya'kôb, and to the Batîhah, and encountered numerous wadys, some shallow, others deep and precipitous, which descend to the Jordan and the lakes.

For the first hour we were surrounded by the droves and flocks of the emîr; and I noticed a shepherd carrying in his 'aba a new-born lamb, and a woman sedulously teaching a young calf what its mouth was made for, and how to manage its spasmodic legs. Such acts not only remind one of the patriarchs, who dwelt in tents and tended cattle, but also of that Good Shepherd from whose bosom no enemy shall ever be able to pluck even the weakest lambkin of the flock.

Two miles from Joaiza I took bearings from an elevated site called es Sindiâneh. A mile farther south is the pretty Tell Delwa, with a ruin upon it, and a wady descending from it towards the Jordan. Three miles farther we came to Thûban and Kefr Neffakh, both large ruins, but particularly the last, where are seen many prostrate houses. After that we wandered about over broken ground for an hour in search of a Turkmân sheikh, and found his camp hidden away in Wady Ghadarîyeh, which joins, lower down, the far greater one of Ruzzanîyeh. This latter wady has many tributaries and much water, and, where it enters the Batîhạh, is called Um el 'Ajaj, and also Wady Sulam.

Having procured a guide from the Turkmân camp, we reached Selukia in half an hour. The ruins of that place are extensive. Directly south is a place called 'Ain Selukia, from a collection of fountains whose waters flow west and unite with Wady Ruzzaniyeh. We had some difficulty in crossing another deep wady, owing to its precipitous banks, about a mile farther south, named Tellûl 'Aiya, from a number of low tells a few miles east of our line of travel. A fine stream of water had cut a deep channel through the hard lava, and went rattling over its rocky course.

Down to Wady Tellûl 'Aiya the country had been more or less wooded: though the oaks that cover the hills south of Bâniâs and 'Ain Fît gradually become more and more rare, smaller also, and more scraggy, still they are found, solitary or in groups, quite to that wady; but south of it they disappear altogether, and the country is bare and cheerless. So, also, the flocks became more rare; indeed, for many miles we saw none, although the pasturage is equally good, and water even more abundant than farther north. Lively little brooks crossed our track every few minutes. I suppose that deserted region is neutral territory between the northern and southern tribes of Bedawîn, who are not always on such terms as to render it safe to be caught far away from their friends.

We were obliged to make a long détour to the east in order to get round the impracticable gorge of the Jermaiah: that wady comes down to the lake near the south-eastern corner of the Batîhah. It is the largest and most rugged of all the ravines into which we looked during our ride of nine hours, and is said to be the chosen resort of leopards, wolves, hyenas, boars, and other wild animals. In fact, the whole Jaulân abounds in game. We saw many gazelles, and a species of deer, called wa'al, considerably larger, and more like the American deer; red-legged partridges also and cranes delight in those solitudes, which their enemy, man, rarely invades, or, if he does, has too many causes of solicitude to admit of delay, or to make it safe to have the crack of his gun heard.

After heading Wady Jermaiah, we turned nearly west down a gentle declivity for half an hour, and then came to a large ruin, called Kuneitirah—not that of the same name on the road to Damascus from Jisr Benât Ya'kôb, but one more ancient, and much larger than that ever was. Sâhm Jaulân is the name of a well-known ruin to the east of this, and it may mark the site of the Biblical Golan, from which the province takes its name. There was also a Khŭrbet Saida some distance to the east of our track, but no Beit Saida. From Kuneitirah to Khŭrbet el Arba'in—ruin of the forty—is half an hour. That was originally a well-built place, and it must have been inhabited until a comparatively recent period.

Crossing a smooth and fertile plain some two miles wide, we descended abruptly into the gorge of Wady Shŭkaiyif by an almost perpendicular path, down which our animals slid rather than walked, greatly to their annoyance and our discomfort. In the wady we found the large encampment of Sheikh Fareij, hidden away so perfectly that it could not be seen until we came directly above it. Our nine hours' ride had made us all weary, and we gladly pitched our tent near that of the sheikh. He was not then at home, but a brother supplied his place, with a boisterous and rather ostentatious welcome. He berated our guide for bringing guests at an hour so late that it was impossible to give them such a reception and feast as were becoming. The sheep were all at a distance, and none could be got to sacrifice in honor of the occasion and the parties until morning, etc., etc. I assured him that we had all necessary provision for ourselves, and needed only provender for the horses. This was speedily brought, and everything arranged to our satisfaction.

Soon after our arrival a group of Arabs gathered round the sheikh's tent, in earnest and angry discussion, and I felt rather anxious to know whether or not we were the subject of controversy. Upon inquiry, it appeared that some of the sheikh's men had fallen in with a party of robbers that had carried off the cattle of the poor peasants who cultivate the Batîhah, and, after a skirmish with them, succeeded in rescuing the stolen cattle, and had brought them into their camp. The owners had come to claim their property, and the rescuers demanded four hundred piasters before they would give them up. The case was brought before the sheikh, who ordered the cattle to be restored without ransom; and, of course, there was grumbling on one side, and loud thanks on the other.

At all the encampments which we passed that day the sheikh's tent was distinguished from the rest by a tall spear stuck upright in the ground in front of it; and it is the custom, when a party is out on an excursion for robbery or for war, that, when they halt to rest, the spot where the chief reclines or sleeps is thus designated. So Saul, when his life was spared by David, "lay sleeping, and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster: but Abner and the people lay round about him."[1] The whole of that scene is eminently Oriental, and perfectly natural, even to the deep sleep into which all had fallen, so that David and Abishai could walk amongst them in safety. The Arabs sleep heavily, especially if fatigued.

Often, when travelling, my muleteers and servants have resolved to watch by turns in places thought to be unsafe, but in every instance I soon found them asleep, and generally their slumbers were so profound that I could not only walk amongst them without their waking, but might have stolen the very 'aba with which they were covered. Then the cruse of water at Saul's head is in exact accordance with the customs of the people at this day. No one ventures to travel over these deserts without his cruse of water, and it is very common to place one at the "bolster," so that the owner can reach it during the night.

Saul and his party probably lay in a shady valley "in the hill of Hachilah," steeped in heavy sleep, after the fatigues of a hot day. The camp-ground of Sheikh Fareij, in Wady Shukaiyif, was adapted in many respects to be the scene of such an adventure. David, from above, marks the spot where Saul sleeps, creeps cautiously down, and stands over his unconscious persecutor. Abishai asks permission to smite him at once, and promises not to smite a second time; but David forbade him, and, taking the spear and cruse of water, ascended to the top of the hill afar off, and cried aloud to Abner: "Art not thou a valiant man? and who is like to thee in Israel? As the Lord liveth, ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the Lord's anointed. And now see where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his bolster."[1] What a strange sensation must have pervaded the camp as David's voice rang out with these cutting taunts! But David was perfectly safe; and there are in this land hundreds of ravines where the whole scene could be enacted, every word be heard, and yet the speaker be quite beyond the reach of his enemies.

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[1] 1 Sam. xxvi. 7, 8, 12.

Amongst the incidents of that memorable ride from the tents of Sheikh Fŭdle to those of Sheikh Fareij was the following: A hardy little girl, about twelve years old, accompanied us on foot. She was the daughter of our guide, and he was taking her to her future husband, at the camp of Sheikh Fareij, who had purchased her for a thousand piasters. She had no companion or friend of any kind, except a young donkey, as little and as lively as herself. This she drove before her with infinite trouble. It was constantly running hither and thither, and she after it, over sharp rocks and through tangled thorns; but still she never seemed to grow weary. I became quite interested in the little girl, and hoped that she might find, in her hitherto unseen husband, a kind protector. When we arrived at the encampment she was taken immediately into the harêm of the sheikh, and I saw her no more. She had nothing in the shape of outfit except the little donkey. I noticed that when she left her mother's tent at Joaiza she had on a pair of high red-leather boots. These, however, she quickly drew off, and, tucking them under her girdle, raced over the rocks after her donkey barefooted, and she did that from early morning until after sunset. Our girls do not do such things on their wedding-day.

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[1] 1 Sam. xxvi. 15, 16.

On the return of Sheikh Fareij, he spent the evening in our tent, and greatly interested us by his dignified manners and intelligence, but an air of sadness pervaded his whole conversation. He complained of the course pursued by Government, whose taxgatherers robbed and plundered the Arabs without mercy; and he maintained that they were compelled to plunder in turn. This was by way of apology for the admission, which he seemed somewhat ashamed to make, that robbing was their trade, and that he and his men were engaged in it daily, either as aggressors or defenders. He further lamented that the ancient, generous customs of the Bedawîn were being corrupted by Turkish oppression. They now robbed one another, and even murder was often added to plunder. "I myself," said he, "live day by day by the life of this good sword," striking his hand fiercely upon that formidable weapon at his side. A very significant admission.

He admitted that, without my guide from the emîr, I could not have reached his tent in safety, and that, without similar assistance from himself, I should not be able to proceed on the morrow round the eastern shore of Lake Tiberias. Of the truth of that I had certain and rather startling evidence the next morning, for I found myself suddenly confronted by a troop of savage Bedawîn, who made no secret of the fact that they were restrained from plundering us solely by the guard from Sheikh Fareij. What significance do such incidents impart to many allusions to robbers in the Bible, particularly in the history of David, and in his Psalms!

What is that forlorn-looking place which we have just passed on our left, evidently entirely forsaken?

It is called Khân Jubb Yûsûf, the inn of the pit of Joseph. Like Khân Minyeh, it is on the line of the ancient highway to Damascus. The place is not so dilapidated as that khân, but it is often quite deserted. Lieutenant Kitchner, of the Palestine Exploration Fund, observes, that "the country round is occupied by wandering tribes of Bedawîn Arabs, with their goat flocks; to the east it is a mass of basalt which has flowed over the country, down to the shores of the lake [Tiberias]; to the west we had the limestone hills of Safed."

When Burckhardt passed this way, the khân was occupied by a dozen Mughrabîn soldiers, with their families, who cultivated the fields near it. He remarks that "the whole of the mountain in the vicinity is covered with large pieces of black stone, but the main body of the rock is calcareous. The country people relate that the tears of Jacob, dropping upon the ground while he was in search of his son, turned the white stones black; and they, in consequence, call these stones Jacob's tears."[1]

Christian and Moslem traditions locate "in a small court by the side of the khân" the pit into which Joseph was cast by his cruel brethren. It is an ordinary well, three feet in diameter, and about thirty feet deep, its sides lined with masonry, and the water reached by cutting through the rock below; the supply is said to be never-failing. Of course the tradition is fabulous. The pit into which Joseph was cast "was empty, there was no water in it;" and it was at Dothan, two days' journey south-west of this place.

The region north of the Lake of Tiberias abounds in strange traditions regarding Jacob and his family. The next point in our day's ride is the bridge over the Jordan, called Jisr Benât Ya'kôb, the bridge of Jacob's daughters; and in various parts of the Upper Jordan valley there are groves of oak-trees and sacred shrines dedicated to those mythical daughters of the patriarch.

Lieutenant Kitchner went from Jubb Yûsûf to Safed, and while there "visited a Mohammedan sacred place in the town, called the Mukâm Benât Yakûb, or the sacred place of the daughters of Jacob. Many legends are attached to the place. I was shown without difficulty into the little mosque, and then into a large square cave, which had originally been a tomb of some importance. Two rows of recesses for sarcophagi lined the walls. Here tradition relates that Jacob and his children lived, and that, when he was old and blind, they brought him Joseph's coat, and the smell of it at once cured him."

"On regaining the outer mosque, I saw a small door, with a green curtain hanging over it, and incense burning in front; this, I was told, was the tomb of the seven daughters of Jacob. There they were said to be all as in life, their beauty unimpaired; but it was too sacred to be approached by any but a true believer. I insisted, and was then told that these beautiful and holy maids were very quick to take offence, and devoured any one who came too near their place of rest. However, after a little persuasion, I pushed the sheikh aside, and squeezed through the hole, being nearly stifled with the bad incense. After a drop of some feet, I found myself on the floor of a cave that opened into another. I explored the caves, one of which had been a tomb; the roof had fallen in, probably in the earthquake of 1838. No recumbent Semitic beauties awaited me, and I was glad to get out into the fresh air again."

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[1] Travels, p. 318.

The tears of the patriarch must have been shed in profuse floods to discolor these black stones, which overspread the country quite down to the shore of the lake at Tell Hûm.

It is supposed that near Khân Jubb Yûsûf was one of those centres of volcanic eruption from which issued the outpourings of lava which cover the surface of the mountains on the west side of the lake. There was a crater near Jish, and another probably at Kŭrŭn Hattîn. The mountain region east of the lake is buried beneath volcanic rock and rubbish to a surprising depth. Those large tells in the Jaulân, which stretch in a line from the end of Hermon southward to the Jarmuk, may have once been active volcanoes, and contributed to swell the lava floods which overwhelmed all that region.

In view of the vast eruption and overflow of volcanic matter around the lakes Hûleh and Tiberias, do you suppose that they cover extinct craters?

Probably not. Geological investigation may yet show that the plain between the ranges of Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, and the southern extension of the Jordan valley, were originally a chasm, continued without interruption down to the head of the Red Sea. That long and deep depression may have then enclosed one single lake, or arm of the sea, extending from the Bŭkâ'a to the Gulf of Akabah. The first interruption — proceeding southward — of this long continuity of the chasm may have been the upheaval of the mountain ridge ed Dahar between Hermon and Lebanon, at the south end of the Bŭkâ'a. That upheaval opened a channel along the roots of Lebanon, through which the waters that covered the

Bŭkâ'a were drained off by the Lîtâny into the Mediterranean Sea. The elevation of the Dahar was caused by the obtrusion of trap-rock, which now fills the valley of the Upper Jordan from Tell el Kâdy northward for more than forty miles.

Another obtrusion of trap-rock at the south end of the Hûleh separated it from the Lake of Tiberias. The Jordan drains the Hûleh, and plunges down a vast volcanic dike for seven or eight miles, and as many hundred feet, in numberless cascades to the Lake of Tiberias, which, as all the world knows, is itself drained off by that river into the Dead Sea. The theory requires a third upheaval in the Arabah south of the Dead Sea, which cuts off that sea from the Gulf of Akabah.

The convulsions by which such alterations in the physical condition of these regions were effected took place long anterior to the appearance of man on the earth. No important change has occurred here since Abraham passed into Canaan from Ur of the Chaldees. Then, as now, the Lîtâny drained the waters of the Bŭkâ'a into the Mediterranean. The Hasbâny, the Leddân, and the Bâniâsy poured their floods into the Hûleh to form the Jordan. Then, as now, that sacred river found its way down to the Sea of Galilee, and was finally absorbed and lost in the bitter waters of the Dead Sea.

No historical physical event, not even the destruction of Sodom, effected any material alteration in the general features of this land; nor should we expect to discover many traces of such agencies at this late day. The geological phenomena which mark this great depression—from an elevation of three thousand feet above the sea-level to thirteen hundred feet below it—are amongst the most remarkable in the world, and will always render this region extremely interesting to the student of earth's mysteries.

We are coming rapidly down to the Jordan; and that, I suppose, must be the bridge of Jacob's daughters, for which we have made this long détour.

Not for that alone, but to see the river above and below the bridge, and to ride along the rarely visited shore of Lake Hûleh. The bridge, though not ancient, at least in its present form, is a very substantial structure, having three pointed arches, the centre

JISR BENÂT YA'KÔB—BRIDGE OF JACOB'S DAUGHTERS.

one being the largest. For about sixty miles, from Jisr el Mejâmi'a, south of the Lake of Tiberias, to Bâniâs, north-east of the Hûleh, all the lines of trade and travel to and from Damascus and the wheat-growing plains of the Haurân here converge; and, as it affords the only passage of the Jordan from the west to the east, this bridge must always have been a place of importance. The Government may well afford to maintain a guard and custom-house station here; and the few Arabs that generally pitch their tents near it profit from the passing traveller by selling eggs and leben, sour milk, as occasion offers.

On the east of the bridge are the remains of an old khân, with a well-built fountain of neatly-cut stone in the centre of the court. It had fine basaltic columns at the corners, and was supplied by a canal from the mountains above. The road from the bridge to the khân, and thence up the eastern mountain, was once paved with large basaltic slabs. It is the highway from Jerusalem to Damascus, through the wild, rocky region of the Jaulân; and along it, I suppose, Saul of Tarsus, "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," hastened on his extraordinary and self-appointed mission of persecution.[1]

About a quarter of a mile south of the bridge are the ruins of a Crusading castle, now called Kŭsr 'Atra. It is on the west bank, and was evidently built to command the ford at that place, and the bridge above it. There is a tradition to the effect that Jacob crossed the Jordan at that ford on his way back from Padan-aram; but if he came here at all, it would more probably have been in going rather than returning.[2]

We cannot loiter long at any place to-day, and must now continue our ride towards Lake Hûleh, along the western bank of the Jordan. The river is about one hundred and thirty feet wide where it issues from the lake, and for a short mile it glides tranquilly onward between green, sloping banks and tall, waving cane towards the bridge of Jacob's daughters.

Here the Jordan is on a level with the sea, but immediately below the bridge the river commences its headlong race over basaltic rocks down to the Lake of Tiberias, and the descent is about seven hundred feet. Its course is through a winding valley, with precipitous banks, down a succession of foaming rapids and roaring cascades. The banks are fringed with an extraordinary growth of oleander, which at times completely conceals the river from view; and the scenery is amongst the wildest as well as the most beautiful in the Holy Land. I have ridden, walked, and scrambled from the bridge down to the entrance of the Jordan into the lake—a stern gorge—fit haunt for thieves and robbers, from whom it is rarely free, even at this day.

What a splendid plain spreads out on our left westward and northward! and evidently as fertile as it is beautiful.

Down to the exit of the Jordan it is as level as a floor, and much of it is carpeted with soft greensward, as rare in the East as it is beautiful and grateful to the eye. One feels tempted to leap from the saddle and roll about on it like a little child. I have seen it covered with golden harvests ready for the sickle. There were then many tents pitched here and there for the reapers, who came from Kedes and other villages on the mountains. There is not an inhabited house on all this plain, and this is owing to insecurity rather than insalubrity. Ard el Kheît, as the district is called, is peculiarly exposed to the incursions of Bedawîn robbers from the Desert east of the Jordan. I came near being plundered by them the first time I visited the Hûleh.

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[1] Acts ix. 1, 2.

[2] Gen. xxxii. 10, 22.

Here we are at the shore, and it is as well defined as that of other lakes, and there is no difficulty whatever in reaching it. There are also many fresh-water shells along the beach.

Though the common reports on this subject are mere exaggerations, still it is quite impossible to get to the lake except on the east side and along this south-western shore. From the utter desertion of this region, it is the favorite resort of water-fowl, and they have it all to themselves. No boat, with the single exception of Mr. MacGregor's now famous canoe "Rob Roy," has ever been seen on the tranquil surface of the Hûleh, and hunters rarely disturb them there.

This Hûleh—plain, marsh, lake, and surrounding mountains—is one of the finest hunting-grounds in Syria, and mainly so because it is not frequented. Panthers and leopards, bears and wolves, jackals, hyenas, and foxes, and many other animals, are found, great and small, while it is the very paradise of the wild-boar and the fleet gazelle. As to water-fowl, it is scarcely an exaggeration to affirm that the lower end of the lake is often covered with them in winter and spring. Here only have I seen the "pelican of the wilderness," as David calls it.[1] One of them was shot near this place, and, as it was merely wounded in the wing, I had a good opportunity to examine it. It was certainly the most sombre, austere bird I ever saw. The afflicted Psalmist, when pouring out his complaint before the Lord, could find no more expressive type of solitude and melancholy by which to illustrate his own sad state.

Though an aquatic bird, and seen in large flocks on the Nile, and at such lakes as the Hûleh, yet there is no mistake or obscurity in the expression, "pelican of the wilderness." They are sometimes found in the wilderness of the Jaulân, and the one I have referred to was shot near a small pool on that high and deserted plateau. During the rainy season the pelican is often seen lingering about old ruins in the Haurân, and along the Tigris, near the site of buried Nineveh, thus fulfilling the judgment of the Lord upon that doomed city: "He will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness, and the cormorant [or pelican] shall lodge in the upper lintels of it."[1]

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[1] Psa. cii. 6.

THE CANOE "ROB ROY" ON THE HÛLEH.

The lake ends in a triangular marsh, the largest part of which is on the eastern bank of the river. It is an impenetrable jungle of ordinary cane, mingled with that peculiar kind called babeer, from whose stems the Arabs make coarse mats for the walls and roofs of their huts. This babeer is the prominent and distinctive production of the marshes, both at the north and south end of the lake. We have seen it also on the banks of brooks in the plain of Sharon, north of Jaffa, and at 'Ain et Tîny. The stalk is not round, but triangular, and two or three inches thick at the base, tapering gradually upward. It grows eight or ten feet high, and ends above in a wide-spreading tuft of stems like broom-corn, shooting out in every direction with surprising regularity and beauty. It imparts a singular appearance to the whole marsh, as if ten thousand brooms were waving over it.

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[1] Zeph. ii. 13, 14.

The babeer is, no doubt, the papyrus, so celebrated in Egypt in ancient times, and from which our word paper is derived. It is repeatedly mentioned by Biblical writers under the name of gôme, translated bulrush in our version. The 'arôth of Isaiah, rendered paper reed, was probably not the papyrus, but any other variety of cane common in Egypt, of which country the prophet was speaking.[1] The Arabic translation of this passage differs widely from the English. Instead of "paper reeds by the brooks," and so on, it reads, "The meadows by the Nile, on the bank of the Nile, and everything sown on the Nile, shall dry up, and be dispersed, and shall not be." This certainly agrees better with the Hebrew; and, according to that, 'aroth may not have been a cane at all.

As to the gôme, the Egyptians employed it for various purposes, amongst others in making boats. But certainly, the "vessels" of gôme, bulrush, that bore the "swift messengers," were not made of bulrushes, but of the larger papyrus which once abounded in Egypt, though it is said not to exist there at present.[2] The Arabic translation of gôme is berdi, and I found a small variety of papyrus in many places in Egypt, called by the natives berdi; but in Syria and Palestine the common name is babeer, and the plant is several times larger than any berdi now seen on the banks of the Nile. The ark for the infant Moses was probably made out of the papyrus, unfortunately rendered bulrushes in the text.[3] Job is made to ask, "Can the rush grow up without mire?"[4] The original is gôme, and should, doubtless, be translated papyrus.

We have along our path abundant evidence of the extraordinary productiveness of this plain. The thistles are higher than our heads, even on horseback, and so thorny that the horses hesitate to pass through them. Wild mustard grows equally tall; and I saw little birds, mostly finches, "lodge in the branches thereof."[1]

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[1] Isa. xix. 7.
[2] Isa. xviii. 2.
[3] Exod. ii. 3.
[4] Job viii. 11.

There are several artificial mounds along this western shore of the Hûleh, and always near a low cape, or at the head of a small inlet. It is by such successive encroachments of the land into it that the lake narrows southward to a point at the outgo of the Jordan. In shape, the lake, like the marsh north of it, is triangular—nearly four miles wide at the northern side, and about four and a half in length from north to south.

It has taken us an hour and forty minutes to come from the bridge to these mills at 'Ain el Mellâhah, near the north-west corner of the lake.

For what is this place distinguished besides its position, which commands the road between the marsh and the mountain?

The great fountain that flows out from the base of the cliffs is immediately formed into a large pool, from which the water runs directly upon the millwheels that grind the wheat for all this region; and afterwards it meanders in a sluggish stream down to the lake. Let us ride into the pool and see the fish, for which it is celebrated. The water is brackish and slightly tepid, and that is the reason why it is so crowded with them. In cold weather they come up in great numbers from the lake, which is hardly a mile distant. The pool is almost a natural reservoir, about four hundred feet in circumference; and from it the surrounding country is supplied with fish. The mills are now the only buildings in this neighborhood; but there was once a considerable village here, as appears from the foundations of old buildings, and from rock-cut tombs in the cliffs above the fountain.

We have now a ride of four hours, more or less, according to the rate of travel, along the western margin and northern end of the marsh to Tell el Kâdy, and from there to Bâniâs.

From our present pathway we can look over the entire marsh north of the lake. If you are fond of solving geological problems, you may calculate the time it has taken to fill up this spongy plain to its present level and consistency. The fountains of Bâniâs and Tell el Kâdy are clear as crystal the year round, and would not deposit slime enough in thousands of years to fill an acre of this ten-mile marsh. But the Hasbâny, the Derdârah from Merj 'Ayûn, and many small torrents from the mountains, are quite muddy during the winter rains; and their contributions have slowly gained upon the lake, crowding it southward into narrow and narrower limits, and the time may come when it will be entirely obliterated.

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[1] Matt. xiii. 31, 32.

The infant Jordan seems in danger of suffocation in this tangled jungle of cane and bushes.

I once asked an Arab if I could not penetrate through it to the lake. Looking at me keenly to see if I was in earnest, he slowly raised both hands to his head, and swore by "the great—the Almighty," that not even a wild-boar could get through. And he spoke the truth. It is an utterly impassable slough, worse than Bunyan ever dreamed of. When encamped, some years ago, at a place farther north, I was tempted down to the verge of the jungle by a flock of ducks. With gun in hand, and my eye on the game, and not upon my footsteps, I cautiously advanced, when suddenly I was floundering in oozy mud that seemed to have no bottom. Flinging the gun back, I regained the bank, but ever after kept a suspicious eye upon its treacherous depths.

But this very impenetrability to man and beast makes it the favorite retreat of crows and rooks; there they breed, and thither they return at night from their rambles over the country. That vast marsh is one of the most populous rookeries in this land. I have watched the rooks and crows at early dawn rising from the jungle. On they come, like wild pigeons in the far West of America; only their line of flight was not across the horizon in great companies, but like the columns of an endless army, stretching from the Hûleh up Wady et Teim farther than the eye could follow; the column, however, grows less and less dense by the departure in every direction of small parties, according to some regulation known only to themselves, until the whole is dissipated.

Those birds are the plague of the farmer. They light on his fields, and devour so much of the fresh-sown seed that he is obliged to make a large allowance for their depredations. It is utterly useless to attempt to frighten them away. They rise at the report of a gun, wheel round and round for a few minutes, cawing noisily, and then settle down again to their work of robbery as if nothing had happened. They fly to a great distance in their foraging excursions. I have seen them many miles away from this their roosting-place. It is interesting to watch them in the afternoon preparing to return hither from the north end of Wady et Teim. They assemble in groups, caw and scream, and rise in ascending circles, until almost lost to sight in the blue depths of the sky; then they sail in straight lines for this marsh, chattering to each other all the way. Assembled here in the evening, they report the adventures of the day in noisy conclave.

This clump of thorn-trees on our left seems to be stuffed full of dry stubble, or rather the deserted nests of the field-sparrow.

The tree is called sidr, and abounds all over Palestine, but I have nowhere seen it so large as around the Hûleh. When I passed this way in the month of May these trees were covered with those birds. There were thousands of them, and they were holding an anxious and troubled consultation as to the safest means of expelling a couple of hawks that had called there for their breakfast. I drove away their enemies, and they speedily calmed down into comparative silence, though they are never entirely quiet except when asleep.

Have you any desire to examine the stationary camp of the Ghawârineh Arabs, and inspect the handiwork of its occupants?

Turn down, then, to the left, and we will soon reach that one on the edge of the plain. You need not be alarmed by that troop of noisy dogs charging down upon us with open mouths. Their bark is worse than their bite—genuine bluster, and nothing more.

Will the coarse mat walls and roofs of these miserable tabernacles shed rain and protect from the cold?

They are made of the babeer cane, and will keep out the rain and defend the inmates from the storms of winter better than you imagine. These Ghawârineh are stationary farmers, and are regarded with contempt by the true Bedawîn.

They are a sinister and ill-conditioned race certainly, and do not fill my ideal of the free denizen of the Desert.

Like most ideals, this one in regard to the tent-dwelling Arab will not be improved on close acquaintance.

What are those women kneading and shaking so zealously in that large black bag suspended from that tripod?

That is a bottle, not a bag, made by stripping off the skin of a young buffalo. It is full of milk, and that is their method of churning. When the butter has come they take it out, boil it, and then put it in bottles made of goat-skins. In winter it resembles candied honey, in summer it is like oil. That is the only kind of butter they have in this country.

This Hûleh butter is the best in the land. I suppose they made butter in much the same way in olden times. Solomon says, "Surely the churning of milk bringeth forth butter, and the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood."[1] But the word for churning and wringing is the same in the Hebrew. It is the wringing of milk that bringeth forth butter, just as these women are squeezing and wringing the milk in that skin bottle. There is no analogy between our mode of churning, and pulling a man's nose until the blood comes, but in this native operation the comparison is quite natural and emphatic.

This little brook we are crossing comes from Merj 'Ayûn, and passes west of Âbil el Kamh. It is associated in my mind with a beautiful lily, possibly one of the flowers of the field referred to by our Lord in that simple exhortation to trust in the kind care of our heavenly Father: "Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."[2] That lily is large, and the inner petals meet above, forming a gorgeous canopy, such as art cannot approach, and king never sat under, even in his utmost glory. When I found this beautiful flower, in all its loveliness, amongst the oak woods around the northern base of Tabor and on the hills of Nazareth, where our Lord spent his youth, I felt assured that it was to such he alluded.

We call it Hûleh lily, because it was here that it was first discovered. It is a species of iris, but with its botanical name, if it have one, I am unacquainted, and am not anxious to learn of any other than that which connects it with this neighborhood. It may possibly have been the flower to which Solomon refers in the

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[1] Prov. xxx. 33.

[2] Luke xii. 27.

"Song of Songs:" "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters." The bride, comparing her beloved to "a roe or a young hart," sees him feeding amongst the lilies.[1] The Hûleh lily delights in the valleys, but is also found on the mountains. It grows amongst thorns, and I have lacerated my hands in extricating it from them. Nothing can be in greater contrast than the luxuriant, velvety softness of this lily, and the crabbed, tangled hedge of thorns about it. Gazelles still feed amongst them, and you can scarcely ride through the woods north of Tabor, where these lilies abound, without frightening them from their flowery pasture.

Our road has led us on to Jisr el Ghŭjar, the bridge over Nahr el Hasbâny, the longest and, in the rainy season, the largest of the streams that contribute to form the river Jordan. You will be struck with the picturesqueness of the river gorge, especially at this season, as the magnificent oleanders that overhang the banks, and almost conceal the jagged rocks and the foaming waters, are all aglow with a profusion of rosy blossoms.

It is twenty minutes from this bridge to Tell el Kâdy, the site of Dan, the fountain and main permanent source of that sacred river in which the Son of God was baptized. Let us now ride on, as we must spend some time at Tell el Kâdy, even though it will be dark before we reach our tents at Bâniâs.

Is it possible that this low mound, covered with black lava bowlders, trees, and bushes, is the Laish of the careless Zidonians, the Dan of the conquering Israelites, and the northern limit of the Promised Land!

Your surprise is quite natural. There is nothing in the immediate surroundings that would lead one to seek for the famous city of Dan or the mighty source of the Jordan, on this tell.

As we ride round this singular mound you see that it resembles the rim of a crater. The fountain rises amongst those briers and bushes in the centre—at least, that portion of it does which passes by the ancient oak, and drives those mills below it. . Most of the water, however, glides through the volcanic wall at the north-west corner of the tell into the pool beneath some wild fig-trees. It is probable that the water from the slopes of Hermon, following the line of the inclined strata, meets, far below, this obtrusion of trap, and, being cut off by it, rises to the surface in this volcanic shaft or crater. At any rate, it first appears in the centre of the mound; and of course old Dan had an inexhaustible supply of excellent water within her walls.

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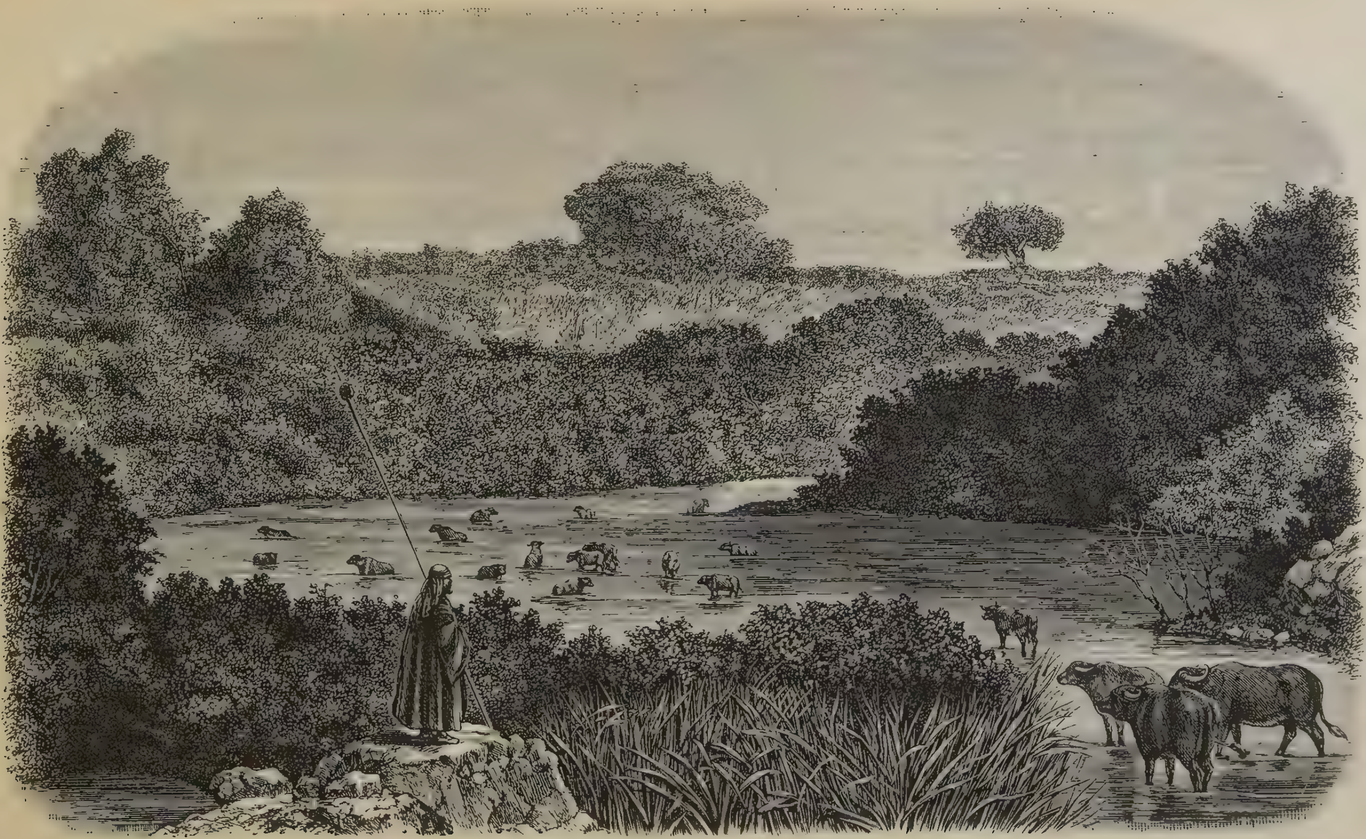
[1] Song ii. 1, 2, 16, 17.

I see very little evidence of the ancient city, unless the houses were built with this lava over which we have been stumbling.

No doubt they were, in the main. Limestone, exposed, melts back to dust in a few generations; but, as basalt never disintegrates in this climate, we have these lava blocks before our eyes much as they appeared three thousand years ago. I was once here, however, when men were excavating well-cut limestone from the rubbish on the north side of the tell.

This site and its ancient story are graphically described by Dean Stanley. He says: "The hill itself—apparently an extinct crater—rises from the plain with somewhat steep terraces and a long level top; and from this again, immediately above the spring, rises another swelling knoll, with another level top, now strewn with ruins. This is the town and citadel of Dan—the northern frontier of the Holy Land. That height commands the view of the whole rich plain. In the south the Lake of Merom, stretched out like a sheet of water above a dam, marks the first descent of the Jordan; beyond, a deep rent in the mountains indicates the yet further outlet, through which it plunges into the Sea of Galilee. The eastern hills still preserve their horizontal outline, the western still their broken form.

"Here is explained how, in this sequestered and beautiful stronghold, the people of Laish 'dwelt secure,' separated by the huge mass of Lebanon and half of Anti-Lebanon from their mother city of Sidon; and 'there was no deliverer in their hour of need,' because 'they were far from Sidon.' Up this rich plain came the roving Danites from the south. Since the victory of Merom these northern regions had hardly been explored: they saw at once, as we still see, how it was 'a large land'—'very good'—'a place where there is no want of anything that is in the earth.' And on this hill, by the source of their sacred river, the little colony from the south-



TELL EL KADY—LAISH, DAN.

ern tribe set up their capital, and called it Dan, 'after the name of Dan their father;'[1] and, far removed as it was from all the sacred places of the south, there they set up their sanctuary also.

"A miniature Shiloh rose in that beautiful grove—a teraphim, and a graven image, and a priesthood of irregular creation—till the time when, after the fall of Shiloh, and the troubled and lawless period of the Judges, such unauthorized practices were probably put down by the strong hand of Samuel.[2] But a sacred place it still remained; and there, for his remoter subjects, Jeroboam first erected the temple with the golden calf—for those to whom a pilgrimage to Bethel or Jerusalem was alike irksome."[3]

Dan never became an important place after Benhadad smote it, nearly a thousand years before Christ; and when Tiglath Pileser took Ijon, and Abel, and all this region, some two hundred years later, the place is not even mentioned.[4] It may have sunk by that time to an unimportant village, known merely for its muzâr, sacred to religious purposes.

These two venerable trees above the stream overshadow the grave of Sheikh Daraik; and their branches are hung with old rags, the usual votive offerings at the tombs of reputed saints. Dan in Hebrew, and Kâdy in Arabic, are synonymous; and there is no doubt that in Tell el Kâdy, the hill of the judge, we have the ancient name perpetuated even unto this day.

Josephus calls this the source of the Lesser Jordan, with reference to others more distant, I suppose, for this is far the largest of them all. From this fountain southward that river preserves its ever-winding course through marsh, and lakes, and sinking plain, quite down to the bitter sea in which it is finally lost. Dan and the Dead Sea—the birthplace and the cradle—the grave and the bourne! Men build monuments and rear altars at such places as this, and thither go in pilgrimage from generation to generation. Thus it has been, and will ever be. It is a law of our nature. We ourselves are witnesses to its power, drawn from the distant New World to this lonely spot by an influence kindred to that which led the ancients to build temples over it.

[1] Judges xviii. 9, 10, 29.

[2] Judges xviii. 30.

[3] Stanley, Sinai and Palestine, pp. 390, 391.

[4] 1 Kings xv. 20; 2 Kings xv. 29.

The young Jordan! type of this strange life of ours! Bright and beautiful in its cradle, laughing its merry morning away through the flowery fields of the Hûleh; plunging with the recklessness of youth into the tangled brakes and muddy marshes of Merom; hurrying thence, full-grown, like earnest manhood, with its noisy and bustling activities, it subsides into life's sober midday in the placid Lake of Gennesaret. When it goes forth again, it is down the inevitable proclivity of old age, sinking deeper and deeper, in spite of doublings and windings innumerable, until it disappears forever in that Sea of Death, that melancholy bourne from which there is neither escape nor return.

But the Jordan can teach other and happier lessons than these. It speaks to all mankind of forgiveness of sin, of regeneration by the Spirit of God, and of a resurrection to everlasting bliss. Must this type of life and immortality be swallowed up by the Dead Sea?

Far from it. That is but the Jordan's highway to heaven. Purified from every gross and earthly alloy, it is called back to the skies by the all-attracting sun, emblem of that other resurrection, when Christ shall come in the clouds, and all the holy angels with him.

Your allegorical allusion, I suppose, is to the fact that the Dead Sea has no outlet, and hence the waters of the Jordan are carried upward to the sky by evaporation.

Nor is that the only lesson which this river has to teach the willing student of Holy Writ. More than three thousand years ago a vast and mingled host encamped on its eastern bank over against Jericho. There was the mailed warrior with sword and shield, and the aged patriarch trembling on his staff. Anxious mothers and timid maidens were there, and helpless infants of a day old; and there, too, were flocks and herds, and all the possessions of a great nation migrating westward in search of a home. Before them lay their promised inheritance,

> While Jordan rolled between,

full to the brim, and overflowing all its banks. Nevertheless, through it lies their road, and God commands the march. The priests take up the sacred ark, and bear it boldly down to the brink; when, lo! "the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon a heap very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan; and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho."[1] And thus, too, has all-conquering faith carried ten thousand times ten thousand of God's people in triumph through the Jordan of death to the Canaan of eternal rest.

I shall not soon forget this birthplace of the Jordan, nor the lessons which it can teach so well.

The pool, or fountain, is crowded with buffaloes; and how oddly they look, with nothing but their noses above water!

Yes; and observe that their mouths are all turned up stream towards the fountain, and on a level with the surface, as if, like Job's behemoth, they trust that they could drink up a river, and can draw up Jordan into their mouths.[2]

Do you suppose the buffalo is that behemoth?

It is not easy to apply the description in Job to the buffalo, yet I believe that these black, hairless brutes are the modern representatives of that "chief of the ways of God," who "eateth grass as an ox," who "lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed, and fens. The shady trees cover him with their shadow; the willows of the brook compass him about."[3] All these particulars are exact enough, and indeed apply to no other known animal that can be associated with the Jordan. Buffaloes lie under the covert of the reeds and willows of the many brooks which creep through the marsh of the Hûleh, wallowing in the mire like swine. And in justification of the translation in Psalms l. 10, may be cited the fact that the general word for cattle in the dialect of this country is behaim, evidently the same as the Hebrew behemoth.

Buffaloes are not only larger but far stronger than the ordinary cattle of Syria, and at times they are unruly, and even dangerous. I have heard of a woman who was knocked over and crushed to death by a cow that had been alarmed and maddened at the seizure of her calf; but generally, unless greatly provoked, they are quite inoffensive.

[1] Josh. iii. 16.

[2] Job xl. 23.

[3] Job xl. 15, 19–22.

The supposition that the region east of the Hûleh was the land of Uz—the home of Job—coincides, at least, with the idea that the buffalo is the behemoth of his ancient poem.

Is this an admitted geographical fact?

The tradition of antiquity was to that effect, and I see no reason to question it. To ridicule the extravagant mania for pilgrimages in his time, Chrysostom says that many people made long journeys into Arabia to visit the dung-hill upon which the patient patriarch sat and scratched himself with a potsherd, and which, he says, was more venerable than the throne of a king. This shows the opinion of that early day in regard to the land of Uz, and modern research confirms the tradition. With a little antiquarian latitude, we can locate the whole family of Aram. This Hûleh may have derived its name from Hul, the brother of Uz. If so, then they and their descendants must have been familiar with the reeds, and fens, and brooks of this great marsh, the chosen resort of the buffaloes, and had often seen them lying in the river Jordan, trusting they could draw it up into their open mouths.[1]

Geshur was probably the district immediately around the eastern side of the lake, and took its name from Gether, the next brother. Maacah, wife of David, and mother of Absalom, was from that little kingdom, and hither her wicked son fled after the murder of his brother.[2] As for Mash, his name may be perpetuated in Meis el Jebel, between Hûnîn and Kedes.[3] It is proper to inform you, however, that these locations are somewhat hypothetical, and that even similarity of names is at times no very safe basis for such theories. The word el Hûleh, for example, is now applied to any low marshy lake or plain.

I thought that critics were pretty nearly agreed that the buffalo is the reem—the unicorn of the Bible?

The description of the unicorn in the thirty-ninth chapter of Job does not suit the buffalo: "Will the unicorn be willing to serve thee, or abide by thy crib? Canst thou bind the unicorn with his band in the furrow? or will he harrow the valleys after thee? Wilt thou trust him, because his strength is great? or wilt thou leave thy labour to him? Wilt thou believe him, that he will bring home thy seed, and gather it into thy barn?"[1] Now, it is implied by all this that the reem was a wild, stubborn, untamable animal, that utterly refused the yoke and the service of man. This is inapplicable to the buffalo. Other references to the reem or unicorn speak of his horns in a way equally inappropriate to those of the buffalo, which are ill-shaped, and point backward and downward in an awkward manner.[2] They would hardly be selected for the poetic image of strength.

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[1] Job xl. 23.

[2] 2 Sam. xiii. 37.

[3] Gen. x. 23.

As to the unicorn, I think it doubtful whether there ever was such an animal, although there is a vague tradition of its existence amongst the Arabs of the Desert, and in other parts of the East. Certainly the fierce-looking unicorn on Her Majesty's escutcheon was never copied from those sluggish and repulsive buffaloes, friends of the marsh and the mud.

In the Arabic Bible the reem is rendered wild ox, and behemoth is left untranslated. If there were any evidence that an urus like that of Germany, as described by Julius Cæsar, not much less in size than the elephant, of great strength and swiftness, and so fierce that it attacked both man and beast, and could not be tamed even when captured young—if such an animal abounded in Palestine, I would accept it as the reem of Bible times. It is scarcely possible that all tradition of such an animal inhabitant as that could have failed, and the frequent mention of the reem by the sacred writers implies that the people were familiar with its appearance and character.

If the Hebrew word translated kine in Pharaoh's dream will include the buffaloes, we should not hesitate to render it thus; because these animals are very common in Egypt, and delight to bathe and wallow in the Nile. It would be altogether natural, therefore, that the king should see them coming up out of the river; and certainly they are lean, and the most "ill-favored" brutes in the world. The original word, however, is the name for ordinary cattle; and in these hot countries all kinds delight to stand in the rivers, not only to cool themselves, but also to keep off the swarms of flies which torment them.

You say that these different branches of the Jordan—the Hasbâny, the Leddân from Tell el Kâdy, and the Bâniasy—unite into one river about five miles south of this place.

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[1] Job xxxix. 9–12.

[2] Deut. xxxiii. 17; Psa. xxii. 21.

I rode from Tell el Kâdy to the junction with Dr. Robinson in an hour and forty minutes. The first thing that struck me, on descending south of the tell, was that the trap formation ceased at once, and we came upon limestone. The ground was firm, and the road good, whereas I had expected to flounder through deep mud. The time, however, was particularly favorable; the harvest was just ripe, and there was no irrigation. I never saw heavier crops of wheat than on this plain, and particularly those about Difneh, the site of the ancient Daphne, twenty minutes south of this tell, where, Josephus says, was "the temple of the golden calf."[1] Passing some magnificent oaks, with countless birds' nests on the branches, we came, in fifty minutes, to el Mansûrah, a mill, with storehouses for grain and straw near it.

Crossing the Bâniasy at a well-wooded place, called Sheikh Hazaib, we came, in fifteen minutes, to the main branch of the Leddân, and in ten minutes more to another, with the name of Buraij. Half a mile from there all the streams unite with the Hasbâny, a little north of Sheikh Yûsuf, a large tell on the very edge of the marsh. Of these streams, the Leddân is far the largest; the Bâniasy the next in size, and the most beautiful; the Hasbâny the longest. The Bâniasy is clear, the Leddân muddy; the Hasbâny, at the junction, muddiest of all. Thus far the branches all flow, with a rapid current, in channels several feet below the surface of the plain, and concealed by dense jungles of bushes and briers. After the junction, the Jordan meanders through the marsh for about six miles, and it gradually merges into the lake.

The soil of the plain is a water deposit, and extremely fertile. The whole country around it depends mainly upon the harvests of the Hûleh for wheat and barley. Large crops of Indian-corn, rice, and sesame are also grown by the Arabs of the Hûleh, who are all of the Ghawârineh tribe. All the cultivation is done by them. They also make butter from the milk of buffaloes, and gather honey in abundance from their bees. The Hûleh is, in fact, a perpetual pasture-field for cattle, and a flowery paradise for bees. At

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[1] B. J. iv. 1, 1.

Mansûrah and Sheikh Hazaib I saw hundreds of cylindrical hives of basket-work, pitched inside and out with a composition of mud and cow-dung. They were piled tier above tier, pyramid fashion, and roofed over with thatch, or covered with a mat. The bees were very busy, and the whole region rang as though a score of hives were swarming at once. Thus this plain still flows with milk and honey, and well deserves the report which the Danite spies carried back to their brethren: "A place where there is no want of anything that is in the earth."[1]

I have the names of thirty-two permanent Arab encampments in the Hûleh, and that is not a complete list; but, as none except Difneh are known to history, you can feel no interest in them. There is not a single dwelling-house on all the plain; but those who cultivate it erect low temporary huts, in which to store the straw or chaff from the summer threshing-floors until it is needed during the winter months. The fastenings on the doors of these frail storehouses are covered over with a composite of clay, and sealed with the signet of the proprietor. The patriarch Job may have seen the same thing in his day, and on this very plain. In Egypt and elsewhere, not only doors, but oil-wells, butter-jars, wine-bottles, and other things, were, and still are, secured in the same way. We know that all kinds of pottery were stamped with the seal of the maker, as were also the bricks at Babylon and elsewhere in the valley of the Euphrates and Tigris.

The muzâr under those white domes, about three miles to the south-east of Tell el Kâdy, is called Seîyed Yehûda, and the place is worth visiting. There are three conspicuous domes over as many venerated tombs. That of Seîyed Yehûda is in a room about eight feet square, and is covered with a green cloth. By the Arabs he is believed to be a son of Jacob, and all sects and tribes make vows to him, and religious pilgrimages to his shrine. South of that is an oblong room, whose dome, still perfect, is the best specimen of Roman brick-work I have seen in Palestine. But the most remarkable are those of ancient temples east of the tombs. They are in ruins, and columns and capitals lie scattered about the base of the hill on which they stood.

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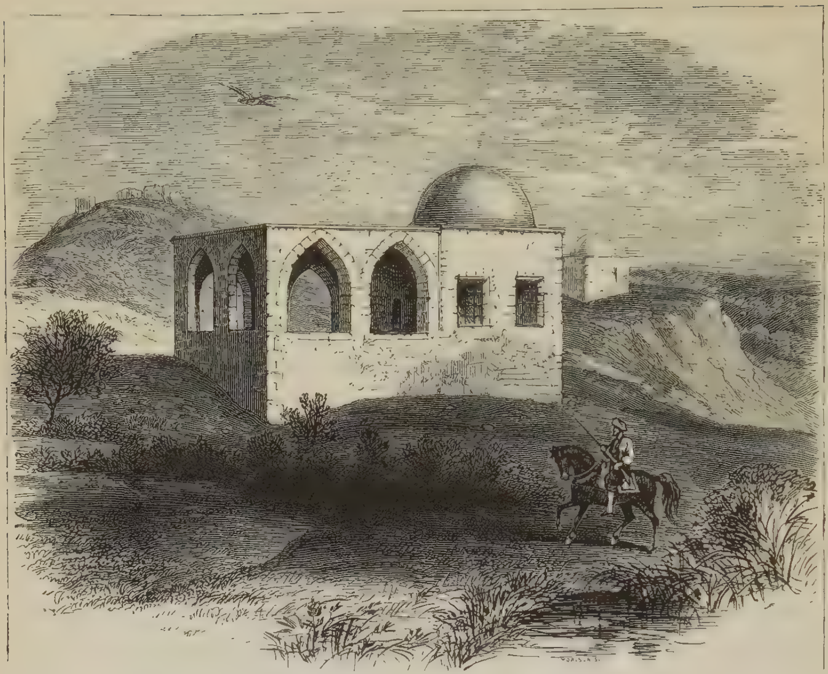
[1] Judges xviii. 10.



SEÎYED YEHÛDA—JUDAH UPON JORDAN.

Across a small wady directly north of the temples is a square building of large, well-cut stone, the object of which I was not able to make out. Farther north, on a high natural mound, are the ruins of el 'Azarîyat, once a considerable place, and all about are manifest indications of a former population. The Bâniasy meanders through the plain directly below Seîyed Yehûda, and upon it are situated Towahîn Difneh, the mills of Difneh. The site of that ancient place is farther west.

Who was this Lord Yehûda, and what place was that?

It marks some ancient site; and I believe it is that "Judah upon Jordan, toward the sunrising," which Joshua mentions as the extreme north-eastern point in the boundary of Naphtali.[1] If this identification be correct, it solves one of the geographical problems in the Bible. It always seemed to me impossible that the border of Naphtali could touch that of Judah anywhere, certainly not

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[1] Josh. xix. 34.

"upon Jordan, toward the sunrising." But here we have a site called Judah, on this most eastern branch of the Jordan, at a point which may have marked the utmost border of the tribe of Naphtali eastward, if we admit that it came up to it, and I see no valid objection against the admission. Naphtali possessed the western side of this plain, and, if able, would certainly have extended the border quite across it to the foot of the mountains, where Seîyed Yehûda stands. This identification may furnish another evidence that, as our knowledge of the country becomes more accurate, difficulty after difficulty in Biblical topography will vanish away until all are solved.

It will take us three-quarters of an hour to ride from Tell el Kâdy to Bâniâs, much of the way through a noble oak forest. Although the sun has set, it is not quite too dark to see and admire the beautiful scenery, and to find the path in the woods across the many streams and along the rough mountain-side.

There, on our right, is the village of Bâniâs, the modern representative of Cæsarea Philippi, and the more ancient Panium, amongst whose ruins, overgrown with bushes, briers, and trailing creepers, we must ride for some time.

You have crossed to "the other side Jordan," between Jericho and the Dead Sea, and now prepare for the passage of the same river near its source above Dan; and there where the tents are awaiting our arrival you can find rest, at least for to-night, under the shadow of those great terebinth-trees, not far from Râs en Neba', the fountain-head itself.

Neither fatigue nor the desire for rest can overmatch my enthusiasm just now, for I must see the birthplace of the infant Jordan before entering the tent.

Follow the path, then, to the cliffs north of us, and you can have the whole fountain to yourself.

XIII.

BÂNIÂS TO KHÂN HÂSBEIYA.

Citadel of Bâniâs.—Ascent to Phiala.—The Sa'âreh.—Olive Groves.—'Ain Kŭnyeh.—Oak Wood.—Charcoal.—Plain of Yafûry.—Lake Phiala.—Frogs, Leeches, Hawks.—Extinct Crater.—Phiala and the Fountain at Bâniâs.—Circuit of the Lake.—Mejdel esh Shems.—Oak Grove of 'Othmân el Hâzûry.—High Places.—Ancient and Modern Superstitions.—The Oak and the Terebinth.—Oak Groves in Palestine.—Castle of Bâniâs.—Colonel Wilson and Lieutenant Kitchner.—Elevation of the Castle above the Village.—History of the Castle.—View over the Hûleh.—Scorpions.—Biblical References to Scorpions.—Canon Tristram.—Sting of the Scorpion.—Fountain of the Jordan.—Baal-Gad.—Temple of Pan.—Worship of Pan.—Description of the Temple and Fountain by Josephus.—Cæsarea Philippi.—Festival and Miracle at the Fountain.—Jesus "in the Coasts of Cesarea Philippi."—Statue of Christ.—"Thou art the Christ."—"Thou art Peter."—Seat of False Worship.—Nature's Morning Psalm.—Streamlets of the Upper Jordan.—Remains of Cæsarea Philippi.—Wady el 'Asal.—Village of el Ghŭjar.—Fountain of el Luweizâny.—The Nusairîyeh.—Dr. Robinson's Description of Kŭl'at Bustra.—Shib'a and Kefr Shûba.—Khureibeh.—Massacres of 1860.—Districts of Wady et Teim.—Rasheiyet el Fukhkhar.—Native Pottery.—Road along the Bank of the Hasbâny.—Ruin at Deir el Mŭtâleîh.—Outlook from the Deir.—Temple at Hibbârîyeh.—Ruins at Bâb el Hâd.—Khŭlwât el Biyâd.—Druse 'Ukkâl.—Religious Centre of the Druses.—Khlât Bey.—M. de Sacy.—Hâsbeiya.—Wady el Bŭsîs.—Ruins of Houses.—Massacre in the Palace at Hâsbeiya.—Bloody Tragedies in Biblical Times.—The Fountain of the Jordan.—Seil, or Cloud-burst.—Storms round Hermon.—Biblical Allusions to Storms.—School Festival.—Neb'a el Fauwâr to Khân Hâsbeiya.—Wady et Teim.—Captain Warren's Description of the Temples in that District.—Temple at 'Ain Hŭrsheh.—Temple at Thelthâtha.—Baal, the Sun-god.—Râsheiyet el Wady.—Massacre of Christians.—Temple at 'Aiha.—Kefr Kûk.—Temples at Rŭkhleh.—Eagle and Medallion at Rŭkhleh.—Baal and his Worship.—Human Sacrifices to Baal.—Moloch and his Worship.—Ascent of Hermon.—Bears.—Summit of Hermon.—Captain Warren's Description of the Ruins on the Southern Peak.—Snow on Hermon.—Greek Inscription.—View from the Summit of Hermon.—Hermon the most Conspicuous Mountain in the Holy Land.—Northern Limit of the Hebrew Possessions.—Biblical Allusions to Hermon.—The Dew of Hermon.—Scene of the Transfiguration.

May 21st.

BEING deeply interested in the scenes and the scenery around us, I left the tent at an early hour. My first visit was to the fountain, to drink and bathe. Then I followed the young Jordan, and crossed over to the western bank for a stroll amongst those venerable oaks. Returning, I climbed to the top of the fortress on the north-west of the ancient city, and looked into the wilderness of bushes and briers that hides the brawling river at its base. Descending to some mills, I forced my way through sharp thorns to the south-west angle of the old wall, and then followed it up to the ruined gate-way and bridge over the ravine, which, I suppose, formed the southern fosse. From the south-eastern corner I followed the ditch, which brought me back here to the tents.

You have made the entire circuit of the ancient fortifications, which, indeed, is not great; but, as they were surrounded by deep ravines, and a ditch which could be filled with water from the fountain, the place must have been very strong. That, however, was merely the citadel: the city spread out on all sides far beyond those narrow limits. The traces of its extension are found not only amongst the oak groves on the north and west, but also south of the brook es Sa'âreh, and on the plain to the east, as we shall see from our road to Lake Phiala to-day.

That lake, now called Birket er Râm, is on the mountain, about five miles distant, to the east, and for the first hour, to 'Ain Kŭnyeh, the ascent is quite steep, and the path leads over vast formations of basalt. This whole region is of the same character.

The Sa'âreh has cut a deep channel in the trap-rock, verifying the proverb of Job that "the waters wear the stones," even the hardest of them.[1]

The country hereabouts is very fertile, and, at the proper season, it is clothed with luxuriant harvests. Those olive-trees which climb the steep declivities on our left, quite up to the castle on the summit of the mountain, I have seen bowing to the ground under a heavy load of oily berries, and every traveller is delighted with the variety and beauty of the wild-flowers which in early spring adorn these ravines.

This village of 'Ain Kŭnyeh, to which we are now coming, shows evident traces of antiquity.

It was probably the suburb or health-retreat for the citizens of Cæsarea, and it is still celebrated for its salubrious climate. There

[1] Job xiv. 19.

ANCIENT BRIDGE, AND ENTRANCE TO BÂNIÂS.

is yet another hour to Lake Phiala, and our pathway lies along the mountain-side, above the noisy Sa'âreh. The oak wood on our right extends far to the south, and is a favorite resort for the flocks of those Arabs who occupy the northern borders of the Jaulân. It is not particularly safe to explore this neighborhood, but I hear of no special danger at present; and the number of people from the lower villages who are out in the forest burning and carrying charcoal, is a pretty certain indication that we can go to the lake without interruption. It is a wild and lawless region, however, and I never stay at Phiala longer than is necessary.

We must here cross the Sa'âreh at this muzâr of Mes'âdy, where the goatherds gather at night and milk their flocks. That brook comes down from the southern extremity of Jebel esh Sheikh, and across the plain of Yafûry on our left, so named from a saint, whose white-domed muzâr is seen on the edge of it, about a mile north of Phiala. And here is the lake itself, round like a bowl, its waters motionless, but full of frogs, and covered with ducks, while scores of hawks hover over the surface. We must guide our horses carefully along the rim of this strange volcanic basin to some slope sufficiently gradual to allow us to descend to the shore.

There is an air of mysterious solitude and desolation quite oppressive about this mountain lake. Shall we ride round it? and how great is the circumference?

That we shall know better after we get back. I am not quite sure we shall find a practicable track all the way, for large parts of it are covered with tangled weeds, and all round the margin

These loud-piping frogs make the marshes to ring.

Phiala seems to be the very paradise of the frogs.

Yes, and upon this grass feed countless millions of leeches. The lake, in fact, has long furnished the chief supply for this region of that insatiable mother, who "hath two daughters, crying, Give, give," as Solomon says.[1]

Those large hawks swoop down like a bolt from the clouds, just graze the surface, and rebound, as it were, again to the sky. How the frogs hush their clamor and dive under when their great enemy makes a descent in their vicinity!

My muleteer shot one of them on a former visit, and it fell into the lake near the shore; he attempted to wade in for it, but got en-

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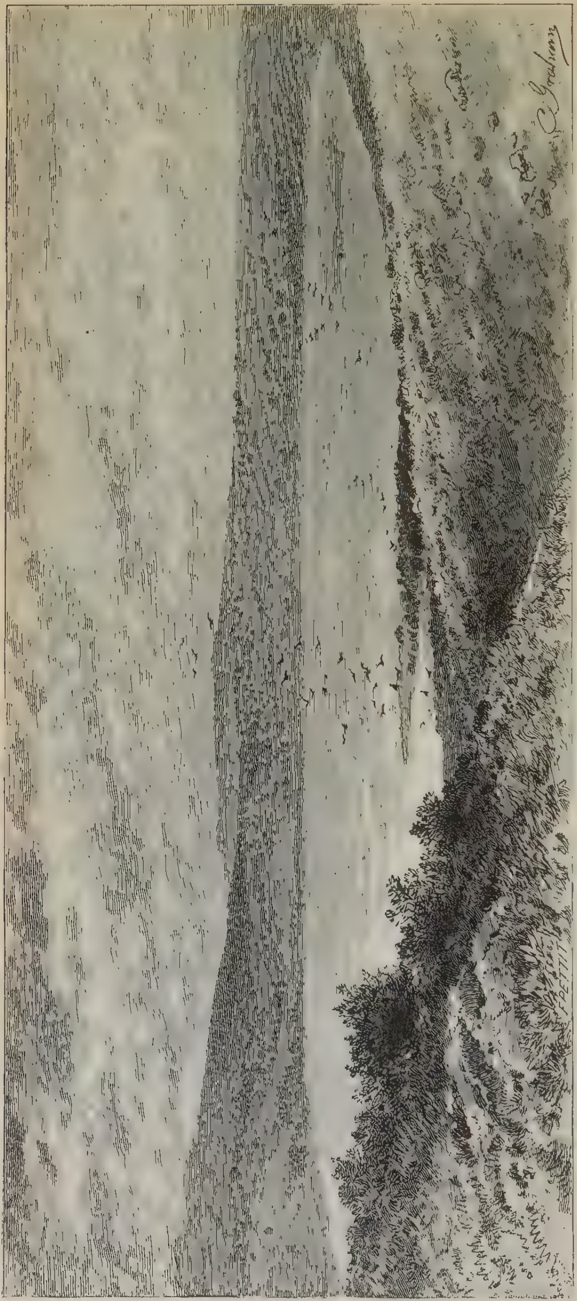
[1] Prov. xxx. 15.



BIRKET ER RÂM—LAKE PHIALA.

tangled in this interminate morass, and we were glad to get him back in safety. Without a boat, it is not possible to examine the bottom of the lake to any considerable distance from the shore.

Do you believe that this sheet of fresh water covers an extinct crater?

Phiala has neither ingress nor outlet; that is, no stream runs into it, and none leaves it. The lake is about two hundred feet below the level of this surrounding region, and it resembles a crater in all respects, and is like nothing else that I have seen. There must be very large fountains, however, beneath the surface, for evaporation in this climate is exceedingly rapid; yet the lake is equally full at all times, or so nearly so as to sanction the native accounts to that effect.

What do you think of the assertion of Josephus, that this is the more distant source of the fountain at Bâniâs?

And that Philip proved the fact by casting chaff into Phiala which came out at Bâniâs? I wish that was the only incredible statement to be found in his history. In regard to Phiala, it is impossible, from the geological construction of this region, that its waters could flow down to Bâniâs. Then, also, this water is dark-colored and insipid, and abounds in leeches; while the Bâniâsy has none of them, is bright as sunlight, and deliciously cool and sweet. And still more to the point is the fact that the river which gushes out at Bâniâs would soon exhaust this lake.

We have made the circuit in fifty-five minutes; the lake is, therefore, about three miles in circumference. I had judged it to be at least that, merely from appearance. Our next point is the castle of Bâniâs, and the path thither leads over the mountain to the north-west. That large village to the north, on our right, is Mejdel esh Shems, inhabited by Druses, sufficiently numerous, warlike, and fierce to keep the Bedawîn Arabs at a respectful distance. We may stop in safety under these splendid oaks to rest and lunch, and then proceed to the castle.

This is certainly the finest grove of the kind I have seen. A solemn stillness reigns within it; and what a soft, religious light struggles down through the thick branches! It is not unlikely that this was one of those "high places" of idolatry which were generally associated with groves in the Biblical narratives.

The muzâr here is in honor of Sheikh 'Othmân el Hâzûry, or 'Othman of Hazor; and some indistinct traces of a village between this and the castle of Bâniâs still bear that ancient name. But this could not have been the capital of Jabin, as some have supposed. That city was given to Naphtali, and must have been situated somewhere in Upper Galilee. Your remark about the religious light of this grove reminds me of a superstition, as prevalent now in these parts as idolatry was in the days when the temples upon Hermon were thronged with deluded worshippers. Ezekiel says, "Then shall ye know that I am the Lord, when their slain men shall be among their idols round about their altars, upon every high hill, in all the tops of the mountains, and under every green tree, and under every thick oak, the place where they did offer sweet savour to all their idols."[1] Not only did the inhabitants of this land delight to build temples and rear altars on the tops of the mountains, as these ruins testify, but they worshipped their idols under every green tree, and especially under thick oaks. They do so still, in a modified form.

These oaks under which we now sit are believed to be inhabited by Jân and other spirits. Almost every village in these wadys and on those mountains has one or more of such thick oaks, which are sacred from the same superstition. Many of them in this region are believed to be inhabited by certain spirits, called Benât Ya'kôb —daughters of Jacob—a strange and obscure notion, in regard to which I could never obtain an intelligible explanation. It seems to be a relic of ancient idolatry, which the stringent laws of Muhammed banished in form, but could not entirely eradicate from the minds of the multitude. Indeed, the Moslems are as stupidly given to such superstitions as any other class of the community. Connected with this notion, no doubt, is the custom of burying their holy men and so-called prophets under those trees, and erecting muzârs to them there. All non-Christian sects believe that the spirits of these saints love to return to this world, and especially to visit the place of their tombs.

Nor can we restrict this remark to the heathen. It is difficult to distinguish between those superstitions and the belief or feeling which lies at the bottom of all saint-worship. Isaiah speaks of a time when the people "shall be ashamed of the oaks which they have desired."[2] May that day speedily dawn! It implies the spread of light and knowledge. No sooner is a man's mind even partially enlightened by the entrance of that word that "giveth light," and "understanding unto the simple,"[3] than he becomes heartily ashamed of these oaks, and of his former fear and reverence for the beings supposed to inhabit them. I have witnessed some ludicrous displays of daring enacted about such old trees by native Protestants just emancipated from this superstition; and I

[1] Ezek. vi. 13.

[2] Isa. i. 29.

[3] Psa. cxix. 130.

can point to many people who have been all their lives long, and are still, held in bondage through fear of those imaginary spirits.

Scarcely any tree figures more largely in Biblical narrative and poetry than the oak; but I observe that certain modern critics contend that it is, after all, not the oak, but the terebinth.

OAK GROVE OF SHEIKH 'OTHMÂN EL HÂZÛRY.

The criticism is not quite so sweeping as that. It is merely attempted to prove, I believe, that the Hebrew word elâh, which in our version is generally rendered oak, should be translated terebinth. Allon, they say, is the true name of the oak. The Hebrew writers seem to use these names indiscriminately for the same tree, or for different varieties of it, and that tree was the oak. For example, the tree in which Absalom was caught by the hair is called elâh, not the allon; and yet I am persuaded it was an oak. The battle-field on that occasion was on the mountains east of the Jordan, always celebrated for great oaks.

I see it asserted by the advocates of this rendering that the oak is not a common or a very striking tree in this country, implying that the terebinth is.

A greater mistake could scarcely be made. Besides the oak groves north of Tabor, and in Gilead, Bashan, Hermon, and Lebanon, there are the forests, extending thirty miles at least along the hills west of Nazareth to Carmel on the north, and from there southward beyond Cæsarea Palestina. To maintain, therefore, that the oak is not a striking or abundant tree in Palestine is a piece of critical hardihood tough as the tree itself.

But it is time to leave this fine oak grove for the castle of Bâniâs. Prepare for one of the roughest climbs you have yet encountered, and look well to your clothes, or they will be left hanging from the branches of the sharp thorn-bushes through which we must force our way. As we ascend the castle hill, hold a steady rein, or you will experience something far worse than thorns.

This ascent is of itself enough to baffle any assailing party.

Those who built the castle did not think so. But, having gained the summit, our path lies along the south wall to that well-defended entrance into the fortress. These deep grooves in the gate-way show that the door did not open and shut, but was drawn up by machinery. To such David, perhaps, alludes in the twenty-fourth Psalm: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in."[1] You will find no other specimen of this kind of gate-way in Syria, and it is therefore the more worthy of special notice. It is also a tacit witness to the comparative antiquity of these works.

Is it probable that the Crusaders erected this extensive fortification? Is not the entire castle in too high a state of preservation to accord with a remote antiquity?

Colonel Wilson does "not place it earlier than the eighth or ninth century," and Lieutenant Kitchner calls it a Crusading castle; but I believe that much of the material out of which these ruined battlements were constructed was here long anterior to the Crusades. Its remarkable preservation is owing to the quality of the stone, which is very compact, and hard as adamant; it rings, when struck, like metal. Even those blocks that have been thrown down in confusion for many centuries are as perfect as the day when they were cut from the mountains.

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[1] Psa. xxiv. 7, 9.

The site is admirably adapted for a castle. The ridge is high, sharp, and isolated, and about fifteen hundred feet long from east to west. The two ends are much broader than the middle, and the entire summit is included within the walls. The east end is far the highest, and the fortifications there are exceedingly strong, commanding most effectually the steep declivity up which the road was cut. On the west there is a rock-cut ditch; on the south and west the mountain sinks down steeply for one thousand five hundred feet to the village of Bâniâs; and on the north yawns the frightful gorge of Wady Khŭshabeh. The walls were defended by round towers of rough drafted stones. It was thus unapproachable on all sides by an assailing force, and could have been taken only by treachery or starvation; nor would it have been easy to starve the place into surrender, if properly victualled. There is space sufficient for a strong garrison, and they might even raise supplies for their use, as the shepherds grow fine crops of tobacco at present; and, though there is no fountain, the large cisterns would afford abundance of good water.

The native tradition is that the dark stairway here at the west end, down which we groped our way into the vaults beneath, was a subterranean, or, rather, submontane, passage to the great fountain at Bâniâs, by which the garrison could obtain both water and provisions; but as that is two miles distant, and so far below, the story is incredible. A respectable man of Hâsbeiya, however, assured me that he once descended it a long distance, to where it was blocked up by the falling in of the roof. The top of this castle is two thousand three hundred feet above the Mediterranean, being nearly the same elevation as that of Kŭl'at esh Shŭkîf.

Is there no history of this remarkable place?

None that reaches farther back than the time of the Crusaders. Under the name of Kŭl'at es Subeibeh, it figured largely in the wars between the Saracens of Damascus and the Templars of Jerusalem; and the Arabic inscriptions upon some of the prostrate ruins speak of repairing and rebuilding by Melek Murâd ed Dîn and others, some six or seven centuries ago. They, however, were not the original architects of this great fortress. As it commands the passage from the Hûleh and the plains of the Jordan over Hermon to Damascus and the east, it must have been a place of importance, at least during those troublous times when such passes were dominated by a frowning castle.

By leading our horses down the terraces through this olive grove we shall shorten the distance to our tents more than half.

What a noble view over the plain, marsh, lake, and mountains!

The Hûleh — lake, and marsh, and plain, and fruitful field — is unrivalled in beauty in this land, no matter when or from what point beheld—from the heights of Hermon, the hills of Naphtali, the plain of Ijon, or the groves of Bâniâs, in midwinter or midsummer, in the evening or in the morning. It lies like a vast carpet, with patterns of every shade, and shape, and size, and laced all over with countless silver threads: those laughing brooks of the Hûleh, now revealed, now concealed; here weaving silver tissue into cunning complications with graceful curves, and there expanding into broad and gleaming patterns, like full-faced mirrors. The plain is clothed with flocks, and the solemn stork is there, and herds of black buffalo bathe in the pools. The lake is alive with fowls, the trees with birds, and the air with bees. At all times fair, but fairest of all in early spring and at eventide, when the golden sunlight pervading the ethereal amber fades into the fathomless blue of heaven. Such is the Hûleh; "behold, it is very good; a place where there is no want of anything that is in the earth."[1]

How happily situated is the village of Bâniâs in this verdant and sheltered nook of Hermon!

Its fifty tottering huts, however, form a wretched representative of ancient grandeur; and the place is now very unhealthy, especially in autumn. During the hot months the people erect booths on their roofs, elevated on poles, to escape from scorpions, of which there are countless numbers amongst the ruins. I have had them tumble down upon me while sitting under the terebinth-tree near our tent, and never pitch there in summer without carefully turning up every stone in search of those dangerous reptiles.

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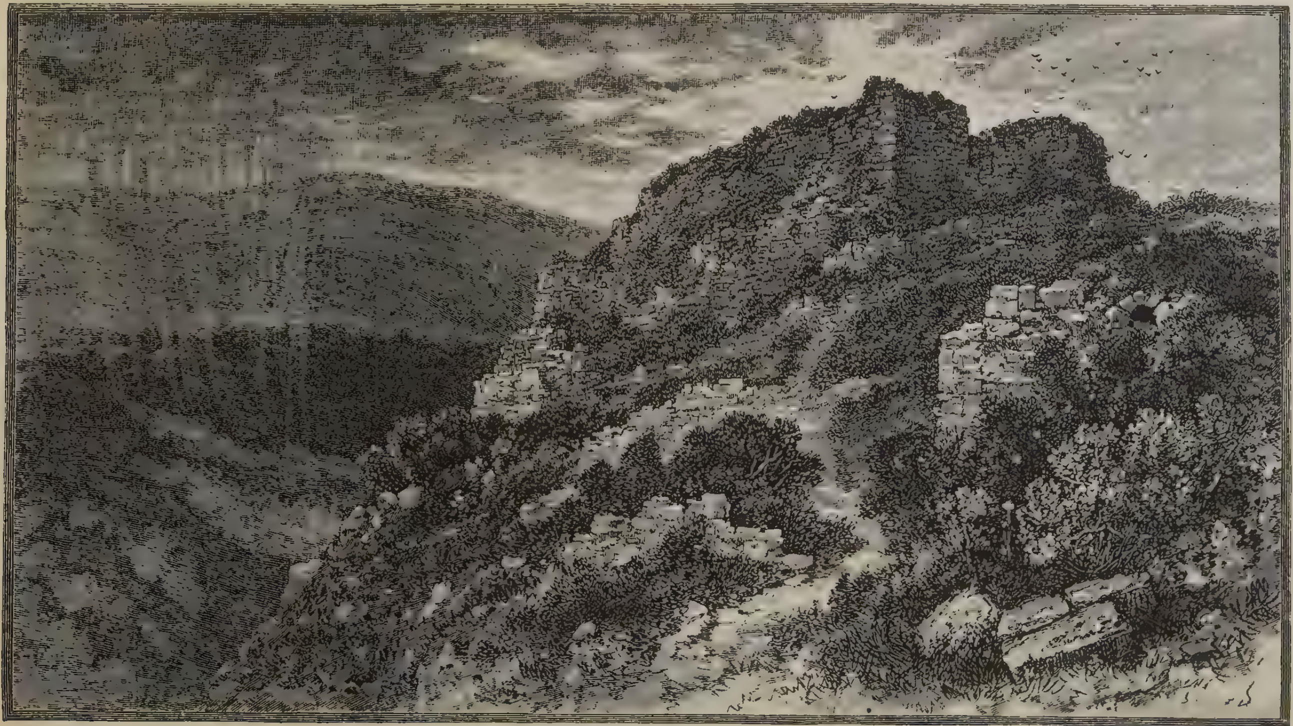
[1] Judges xviii. 9, 10.



KŬL'AT ES SUBEIBEH—CASTLE OF BÀNIÂS.

I should like to see one of these stinging scourges. They are not a little celebrated in the Bible. An insolent, though figurative, allusion to them cost Rehoboam the loss of ten tribes. They magnified the horrors of "that great and terrible Wilderness of Wandering," and were standing types of the wicked, whose "torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man."[1]

EL 'AKRABEH—THE SCORPION.

Your wish can easily be gratified. You may chance to get even more than you seek for.

Is there any resemblance between a scorpion and an egg to suggest the antithesis in our Lord's question, "If a son shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?"[2]

There is no imaginable likeness between an egg and the ordinary black scorpion of this country, either in color or size, nor, when the tail is extended, in shape. But old writers speak of a white scorpion; and such a one, with its tail folded up, as in specimens of fossil trilobites, would not look unlike a small egg. Canon Tristram suggests that "our Lord adopts a Grecian proverb, 'A scorpion instead of a perch,' *i. e.*, giving, instead of what is useful, that which is both dangerous and repulsive." Perhaps the contrast, however, refers only to the different properties of the egg and the scorpion, which is sufficiently emphatic.

Our Lord says, "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions."[3] Is that fact, literally understood, necessarily miraculous?

I so understand it, though the handling of scorpions with impunity requires no miraculous aid. I have seen boys draw out scorpions from their holes by thrusting in small sticks with wax on the end, into which their claws fasten. They then catch them in their fingers, and stick them on to a rod coated with bird-lime or wax, until they cover the rod with them; nor do they seem to be afraid, but rub their hands up and down this string of scorpions without hesitation. We also hear of fanatics who actually crush them in their mouths, and pretend to eat them. But it is to be remembered that the scorpion's sting is in its tail, with which it strikes its victim, as is implied in the quotation from the Revelations, and that it cannot strike sideways. If, then, it be properly held between the fingers, or stuck into the bird-lime so as not to admit of its longitudinal stroke, there is no danger.

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[1] Rev. ix. 5, 10.

[2] Luke xi. 11, 12.

[3] Luke x. 19.

The pain from its sting is intense, but never fatal in Syria. Those on the northern coast of Africa are said to be larger, and the poison so virulent as frequently to cause death. I tried the experiment of surrounding a scorpion with a ring of fire, and, when it despaired of escape, it repeatedly struck its own head, and soon died, either from the poison or its satanic rage, I could not be certain which—perhaps from both combined.

May 21st. Evening.

Let us walk out to the base of the cliff, where we can enjoy the cool evening air, near the noble fountain of the Jordan. Dr. Robinson supposes that Baal-gad, the god of fortune, mentioned in Joshua, marked the northernmost limit of Palestine, and "was no other than this romantic spot, this secluded grotto at the fountain of Jordan, where the Phœnicians or Syrians had established the worship of one of their Baals. In process of time," he adds, "this was supplanted by the service of the Grecian Pan; and thus the name Panium was introduced, and the earlier one forgotten."[1]

There can be no doubt, I suppose, but that this is the source of "the greater Jordan," mentioned by Josephus; and this mass of rubbish below the cave, through which the fountain flows in many streams, is the débris of the temple of Pan.

The Greek inscription on the face of the cliff over that votive niche confirms the fact. Some of those niches are finished at the top in the form of a shell.

Pan was a Grecian divinity, always, in my imagination, associated with Arcadia, and it is unexpected, and somewhat startling, to meet with the name and the worship at the foot of Hermon, and the birthplace of the sacred Jordan.

There is nothing singular in that. The gods of ancient mythology were known and worshipped amongst nations and peoples

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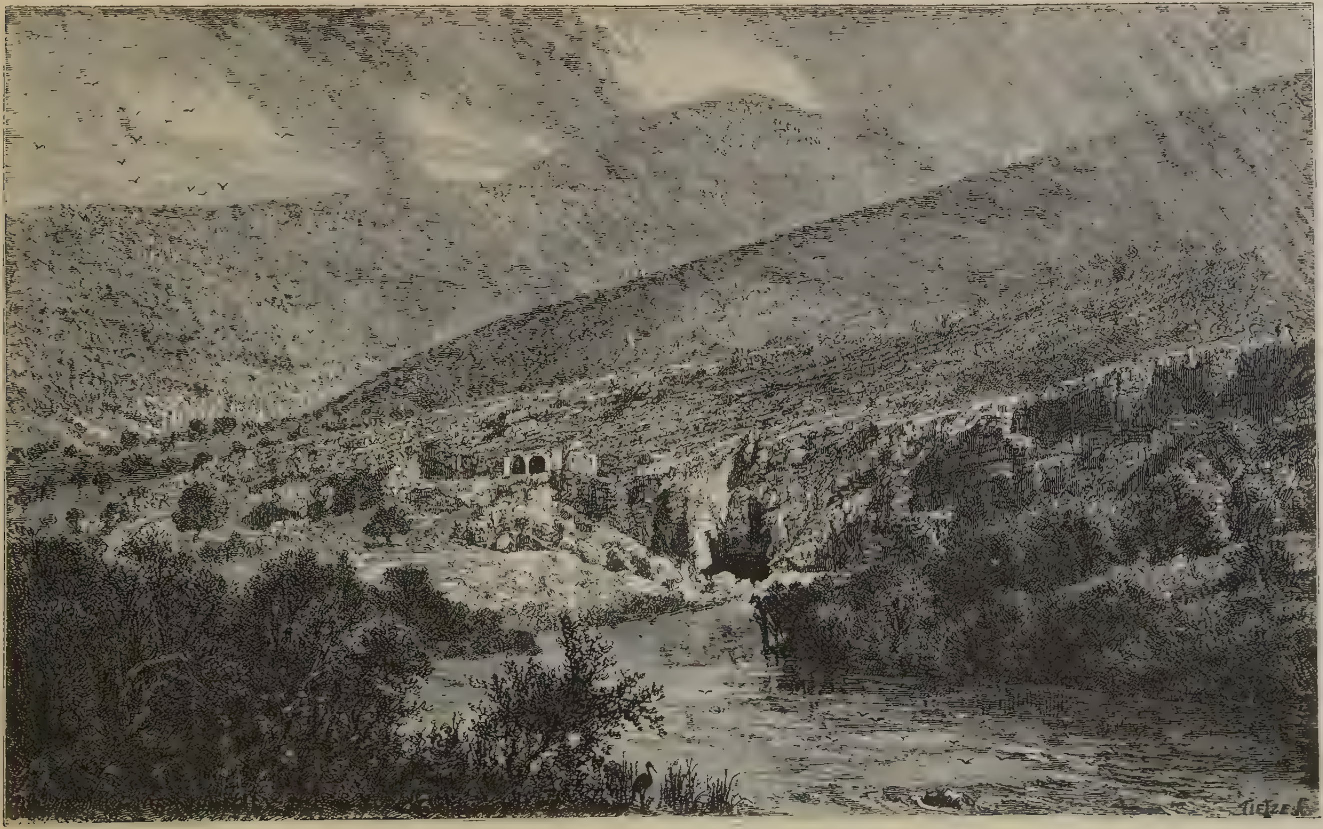
[1] Rob. Res. vol. iii. p. 410.



RAS EN NEB'A AT BÂNIÂS—SOURCE OF THE JORDAN

widely separated. It is quite possible that those indolent and effeminate Phœnicians, who "dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians,"[1] down at Tell el Kâdy or Laish, may have selected this charming locality for the original worship of Pan, the god of flocks, bees, and fishes. All three abound here. I have seen the great mound of rubbish above the fountain literally covered with long-eared goats, lying in drowsy repose, listening to the gentle murmur of the infant river. On the plain below us are more beehives than elsewhere in Palestine, and the brooks are alive with fish.

Certainly, if Pan was in form one-half a goat, as mythology fables, and associated with shepherds and flocks, he could desire no better habitation than this, with its rugged cliffs, deep grottoes, solemn groves, and gushing fountains.

We know very little about this fabulous divinity, and the rites and ceremonies of his worship. They, doubtless, differed widely in different countries. Bâniâs would have been well adapted for the celebration of the Lupercalia. Imagine the drunken Luperci rushing through these oak glades, a girdle of goat-skin around their bodies, shouting, dancing, and howling like demons. Perhaps there was less licentiousness and wild disorder here than in Greece and Italy; yet, when we recall the festivals of Adonis and Venus on Lebanon, above Jebeil, we have little ground to believe that scenes equally monstrous were not enacted around this crystal fountain of the Jordan.

Josephus thus describes this locality: "And when Cæsar had further bestowed on him [Herod] another additional country, he built there also a temple of white marble, hard by the fountains of the Jordan. The place is called Panium, where is a top of a mountain that is raised to an immense height, and at its side, beneath, or at its bottom, a dark cave opens itself, within which there is a horrible precipice that descends abruptly to a vast depth. It contains a mighty quantity of water, which is immovable, and when anybody lets down anything to measure the depth of the earth beneath the water, no length of cord is sufficient to reach it. Now the fountains of Jordan rise at the roots of this cavity outwardly."[2] Making due allowance for subsequent changes, it is still impossible to clear that author of great exaggeration. He probably never saw Bâniâs himself, and took the extravagant stories of others for truth.

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[1] Judges xviii. 7.

[2] B. J. i. xxi. 3; Ant. xv. x. 3.

It is evident that Bâniâs was a remarkable place long before the age of Augustus. Philip the Tetrarch embellished the temple and enlarged the city, and called it Cæsarea in honor of Tiberius, and Philippi in his own, and to distinguish it from Cæsarea Palestina. Herod Agrippa beautified it, and complimented that monster Nero by giving it the name of Neroneas. It was here that Titus, after the destruction of Jerusalem, was feasted by Agrippa for twenty days, and in the temple he "returned public thanks to God for the good success he had in his undertakings."

Eusebius thus discourses about the fountain: "At Cæsarea Philippi, called Paneas by the Phœnicians, they say there are springs shown there at the foot of the mountain called Panius, from which the Jordan rises, and that on a certain festival day there was usually a victim thrown into these, and that this, by the power of the demon, in some wonderful manner entirely disappeared. The thing was a wonder to all that were there to see it.

"Astyrius [a pious Roman of senatorial rank] happening to be once present at these rites, and seeing the multitude astonished at the affair, pitied their delusion. Then, raising his eyes to heaven, he implored the God over all through Christ to refute this seducing demon, and to restrain the delusion of the people. As soon as he prayed, it is said that the victim floated on the stream, and that thus this miracle vanished, no wonder ever more occurring in this place." The latter remark is probably true, whatever we may think of the rest of the story. These passages, however, are curious, as showing what the traditions concerning this place were at the close of the third century, when Eusebius visited it.

But we are now on ground much more sacred than mere classic association can render any place. Our blessed Lord has been here, at Cæsarea-Philippi, has drank of this same fountain, and looked upon this lovely scene. With his usual compassion, he taught the people and healed their diseases.

Eusebius says that the woman cured of an issue of blood belonged to this city, and he thus writes on that subject:[1] "They say that her house is shown in the city, and the wonderful monuments of our Saviour's benefit to her are still standing. At the gates of her house, on an elevated stone, stands a brazen image of a woman on her bended knee, with her hands stretched out before her, like one entreating. Opposite to this there is another image of a man erect, of the same materials, decently clad in a mantle, and stretching out his hand to the woman. This, they say, is a statue of Jesus Christ; and it has remained even until our times, so that we ourselves saw it whilst tarrying in that city." Who knows but that those statues are still buried under this rubbish, and may some day be brought to light? Theophanes, however, says that Julian the Apostate broke them to pieces. It would be like him, if he ever happened to see them.

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[1] Luke viii. 43–48.

If all that is recorded in the sixteenth and seventeenth chapters of Matthew in immediate connection with the visit of our Saviour actually occurred in this neighborhood, it has been the scene of some remarkable incidents. "When Jesus came into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?—whom say ye that I am?" Simon Peter answered our Lord's question by the solemn assertion, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," and received in reply, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church."[1] Could the claims of Bânâis to this wonderful discourse be established, it might enhance the interest of the place in the eyes of those who have made so much capital out of the power of the keys here conferred. We leave the hint for the benefit of those whom it more immediately concerns.

For the history of Bâniâs during the Roman Empire, and under the Crusaders, Saracens, and Turks, you must consult more authors than can now be mentioned. Reland's "Palestina" and Robinson's "Researches" will serve as guides to the sources of information.

There must be something about this Upper Jordan and its surroundings particularly calculated to foster the religious or the superstitious propensities of our nature. Tell el Kâdy, four miles west, was the seat of false worship from the days when the Danites conquered it, and there set up "an ephod and teraphim, and a graven image and a molten image."[1] Long after that Jeroboam placed a golden calf in Dan, which "thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan."[2]

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[1] Matt. xvi. 13–20.

Bâniâs itself was celebrated for the worship of Pan; and as we follow up the country we shall meet with the ruins of temples all over the land, especially in the district of Upper Wady et Teim, and around the Mountain of Hermon.

May 22d.

We are again favored with a superb day, and from the plateau south of the Sa'âreh I saw the world wake up this morning, and listened to the morning psalm of universal nature; and it was an hour not soon to be forgotten.

Bâniâs, with its surroundings, forms one of Nature's grandest temples, in whose presence those made by men's hands are a mere impertinence. These oak glades and joyous brooks, these happy birds and frisking flocks, all bear their parts in her service; and the mountains preach, the hills and valleys sing, and the trees of the field clap their hands.

Thus the ancient prophets interpreted the manifold utterances of nature: "Praise the Lord from the earth, ye mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars: beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl: kings of the earth, and all people; both young men, and maidens; old men, and children: let them praise the name of the Lord: for his name alone is excellent; his glory is above the earth and heaven."[3] In the scenes and scenery around romantic Bâniâs, impressive Jordan, and sublime Hermon, there is not only poetry, but solemn mystery, suggestive of rich spiritual representations of sacred truths.

The first half-hour of this morning's ride leads us westward along the road by which we came the other night. The pathway winds through trees and bushes of every variety of foliage and flower—the dark green of the oak and the olive, the silvery gleam of the poplar, the burning red petals of the oleander, and the snow-white blossoms of the myrtle. And here we cross the streamlets of the Upper Jordan, as they burst through the tangled thickets, and come foaming and tumbling over the black volcanic rocks.

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[1] Judges xviii. 14, 30, 31.

[2] 1 Kings xii. 28–30.

[3] Psa. cxlviii. 7–13.

STREAMLETS OF THE UPPER JORDAN.

The remains of old Cæsarea-Philippi, over which we stumbled in the dusk of evening, are rather insignificant, consisting mainly of half-buried columns, and traces here and there of prostrate buildings amongst the noble oak-trees above us on our right.

Few and unimportant as they are, however, they prove that the city once extended a considerable distance in this direction, forming, no doubt, a beautiful suburb, amply supplied with delicious water, and abundantly irrigated by the streams from the great fountain. These noisy little brooks, coming from the same inexhaustible source, leaping over the rocks, and plunging down the green terraces, will follow us to the general level of the Hasbâny valley. Up that valley northward lies our road, having the towering and rugged ramparts of Hermon above us to the east.

That wild gorge that runs up far amongst them on our right is called Wady el 'Asal, the valley of honey. I once descended it from the oak-clad hills of Shib'a, greatly to the perplexity of my horse, the tearing of my clothes, and the laceration of my hands and face by the thorny thickets through which I had to force my way down to Tell el Kâdy; but I found no bees or honey, and nothing in the valley to suggest its sweet name.

I notice a white dome near that village west of us: what is the name of the place?

It is one of only three villages of the Nusairîyeh in this region, and the dome marks the grave of a reputed saint of theirs. The village is called el Ghŭjar, and is located on the east bank of the Hasbâny, there a respectable stream, which has worn for itself a narrow and precipitous channel through black basalt over two hundred feet deep. A short distance lower down the Hasbâny is reenforced by a powerful stream, called el Luweizâny, which bursts forth from under the limestone rock; and from thence southward to the Hûleh the banks are overshadowed by willows, sycamores, and other trees, and fringed with thickets of oleander and flowering bushes, while the stream is alive with fish.

Who are the Nusairîyeh? We have not met with them hitherto in our travels through the country.

The great body of that sect inhabit the mountain range from "the entrance of Hamath" to Antioch. There are many of them also in Antioch, and they spread around the north-east end of the Mediterranean towards Tarsus and Adana. It is impossible to ascertain their number, but they have many villages and hamlets, and are estimated as high as two hundred thousand. I have travelled amongst them, and concur in the verdict rendered against them by those best acquainted with their character. They are the most ignorant and debased race in the country. Their religion is a secret one, and believed to be even more infamous than their external morals. The skill with which they evade a disclosure of their religious mysteries always excited my astonishment. My party once stopped to rest under the shadow of a great rock between Jebeleh and Lâdikîyeh, and, while taking our lunch, a company of those people came up. Their sheikh, learning from the muleteers that one of us was a doctor, earnestly applied for medicine.

While the hakîm was preparing it I asked the sheikh what sort of people inhabited the mountains above us. "They are fellâhîn." "I know that; but what is their religion?" "Religion! what need have fellâhîn of religion?" "Everybody has some sort of religion. What prophet do you follow?" "We reverence 'Ali; but whom do you follow?" "We are Christians; we love Jesus Christ, and our religion is contained in the New Testament." "We also love Jesus Christ, and curse Muhammed. We and you are one." "No, no, you are not Christians." "Why not? We love Christ and Moses: your religion and ours are exactly the same." And, taking up the medicine, he went off as fast as possible.

The Governor of Hamath had sent a horseman to guide and protect us across the mountains between that city and Tripoli. Our guide compelled a man from a village of this people to accompany us, and, as he could not run away, I determined to question him about his secret faith. I gave him my horse to lead, and, walking by his side, I told him something about my religion and that of the Druses and the Hindoos, with which he seemed much interested. Finally, I asked about his faith. "I am a fellâh," said he. "I know you are a farmer; it was not your occupation, but your religion, I asked after; tell me something about your faith. I am a Christian. I can tell you what I believe and how I worship; so will the Moslem and the Hindoo. Why will not you do the same?" "We are fellâhîn—that is enough. What do we want of religion? Do you see that white tomb on the top of that hill? It is called Sheikh Ibrahîm el Hakîm. If any one has sore eyes, and visits that muzâr, he will get well. Is it not near noon? We have four hours yet to el Hŭsn from that ridge ahead of us."

I was thus completely baffled by a fellâh from the wild mountains of the Nusairîyeh.

That remarkable people have no known form of prayer, no times or places of worship, and no acknowledged priesthood. At weddings and funerals they sometimes use Muhammedan ceremonies, but only when in the vicinity of Moslem towns. They practise polygamy, and are said to marry near relatives. I could not learn whether they believed in the immortality of the soul and a future state of rewards or not, but they hold to transmigration of souls somewhat as do the Druses. They seem to have derived some of their customs and reputed tenets from Persia. Whatever of Muhammedanism has been incorporated with their original superstition seems to have been borrowed from the followers of 'Ali; and they are supposed to be the remnant of the Karmathians, a heretical sect of Moslems. Their name was probably derived from Nusair, a disciple of 'Ali.

Many things led me, when amongst them, to suspect that they were fragments of Syria's most ancient inhabitants—descendants of those sons of Canaan who were in possession of Arka, Arvad, Zimra, and Sin, on the shore west of their mountains, and of Hamath, on the east, when Abraham "came from Ur of the Chaldees." Expelled from their primeval seats, they retired to the inaccessible mountains where they now live. These are so situated that they were never penetrated by any great military roads or mercantile routes. Perhaps many of their brethren, when driven from the south by Joshua, took refuge with them. I was struck with the prevalence in the Nusairîyeh district of names of men, and mountains, and castles, and villages which were identical with those once common in Palestine.

As Christian missions are now established amongst them, we may expect to be better acquainted with the origin, history, manners, customs, and religion of that people. They have many sacred tombs, to which they resort on various occasions, but their ceremonies there are performed in secret. Should any of their number divulge their mysteries he would be assassinated; and this horrible fact reminds us of the stories about the Assassins, for it was on those mountains that those somewhat fabulous monsters are said to have resided.

But enough of the Nusairîyeh. 'Ain Fît and Za'ûra, on the mountain south of Bâniâs, are the only other settlements of that people in this region.

On the mountain east of our road, some two miles distant, is an ancient site called Kŭl'at Bustra. It occupies "the brow of an almost precipitous terrace of the mountain, at least a thousand feet above the plain." I have visited it more than once, and on one occasion with Dr. Robinson, who has with his usual accuracy written all that need be said about its solitary remains:

"The summit of the projecting shoulder is crowded with ruins of edifices, built, indeed, of hewn stones, but without architectural ornament, and laid up coarsely without cement. It seemed to have been a site of temples. We are able to make out not less than four with any certainty, and probably more; having grooved portals of hewn stone, and rows of rude columns in the interior. The temples were from thirty to fifty feet in length, and of proportionate width. The place could never have been either a fortress or a town. It seemed rather a spot consecrated to religious worship. Perhaps the priests resided at the hamlet lower down.

"The remains of Kŭl'at Bustra present a riddle which I am not able to solve. There is no mark of Christianity about them; they could have been neither churches nor convents. The whole collection greatly resembles, in location and arrangement, the Khŭlwât, chapels of the Druses, like that of el Biyâd, on the hill south of Hâsbeiya. The ruins may be of high antiquity, as the stone is so compact and so impregnated with metal that time scarcely produces any change upon it. This may, perhaps, have been one of the 'high places' consecrated by the Syrians or Phœnicians to the worship of their Baalim."[1]

The brook which we have just crossed is one of the shortest in the country, flowing from a single fountain at the base of the cliff on our right. It is comparatively low now, but in the rainy season it is a turbid and swollen torrent, which one's horse hesitates to enter. I have passed this way in autumn, when it was entirely dried up, and to that extent it is certainly intermittent. Shib'a, the highest village on Hermon, and Kefr Shûba, farther to the north, upon that lofty mountain, are celebrated for their large flocks of goats, and also for the grand outlook over the Hûleh and the surrounding country, which they command. We have now accomplished about one-half of the ride to Hibbârîyeh, and will turn down to that small village of Khureibeh, on our left, and there rest and take our lunch.

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[1] Rob. Res. vol. iii. pp. 414, 415.

Khureibeh was pillaged and burnt during "the massacres of 1860," and has only partially recovered from that calamity. The few Protestants residing here now have been unhappily involved in a case of accidental homicide. By bribery and corrupt influences the trial was prolonged for years, and thus the relatives and friends of the accused were impoverished and nearly ruined.

This is the first we have seen of those villages that were burnt, and their inhabitants massacred, during the civil war that raged in this country, especially in the Lebanon.

A large portion of the Christian world became deeply interested in the long and earnest struggle for religious toleration which was carried on in this region for many years, and which culminated in massacres so extensive and horrible as to call for the interference of all the great powers of Europe, and the occupation of the country by the French.

Can you not give some account of those eventful times, while we are resting here in the shade of this spreading walnut-tree?

It must be a brief and general one, for some of the incidents I recall with reluctance and sadness. My acquaintance with this region commenced in 1836, when I spent a night in the palace of the Emîr Sa'ad ed Dîn, the governor of the town and district of Hâsbeiya. I had come over from Lebanon to explore the sources of the Jordan, then but little known and very rarely visited. That excursion had to me all the charm of first discovery, and was exceptionally delightful. Subsequently I spent part of several years in

Hâsbeiya, and became perfectly familiar with the surrounding country. My connection with the struggle for religious liberty began in 1844, and was brought about by the following circumstances:

During the winter of 1843 and 1844 a considerable portion of the members of the Greek Church revolted against their ecclesiastical rulers, and, in a body, passed over Lebanon to Beirût, to plead their cause before the Governor-general of Syria. Not meeting with a satisfactory reception, and becoming acquainted with intelligent native Protestants, they began to discuss the fundamental questions of Christianity with a zeal largely stimulated, of course, by worldly considerations. They soon came to the determination to solve the points in dispute with their former religious oppressors by dissolving all connection with them and declaring themselves Protestants.

Instead, therefore, of prosecuting their cause in the dîwân of the Pasha, they furnished themselves with Bibles and books, and returned home to open a place of evangelical worship, and to commence the first common school ever known on Hermon. It would require a volume to trace the history of this movement, and describe the fierce persecutions which grew out of it. The consular representatives of the great European powers were ultimately embarrassed with it, and the debates were transferred from Syria to Constantinople, and then to the Courts of St. Petersburg and St. James, and elsewhere. The highest British authority in Syria gave as the reason why he could do no more for the protection of expatriated Protestants, that the Autocrat of all the Russias was ready to push the question to a war, if England did not abandon her friendly interference in their behalf.

The excitement of those times has long since passed away; most of the actors have gone to their individual account, and there remains no sufficient reason to withhold the tribute of respect and gratitude due to those whose steadfast friendship was God's appointed shield between these down-trodden exiles and utter extermination. Sir Stratford de Redcliffe, English Ambassador at the Sublime Porte, did all that one, embarrassed with the complicated responsibilities of his high office, could do. But it was mainly owing to the diplomatic skill and unwearied efforts of Mr. Richard

Wood, then English Consul at Damascus, that the people were rescued from absolute destruction, and the struggle for religious liberty in this land was carried through to a triumphant issue.

In the month of July, 1844, I went from Abeîh to Hâsbeiya to relieve Dr. Eli Smith, who had become exhaused by the heat of summer and the scenes of confusion, and even danger, through which he had passed. The whole town was in a state of wild commotion. About thirty horsemen had arrived the day before from Zahleh, with orders to compel the Protestants, by fair means or foul, to return to their church. The plan adopted was to quarter themselves upon the Protestants, and not to leave their houses until this object was accomplished. The emîrs, of course, winked at their conduct; and a band of the most lawless in the place extemporized themselves for the occasion into a "society of young men" to carry out the plans of their superiors. The Protestants either hid themselves or fled from the town.

The alarm and distress were indescribable. After several days of such work the horsemen returned home, having had but little success in their mission; but the ecclesiastics of the town, aided by the "young men," continued the work, and by entreaties, threats, bribes, reproaches, and actual violence, drew off a score, perhaps, of the Protestants during the following ten days.

By the 29th of July I had become quite wearied by the general confusion; and, after several sleepless nights, I left the place for a ride upon the mountain range of Southern Hermon. Having visited Lake Phiala, I returned for the night to Jubbâta, north of the castle of Bâniâs; and, though I had been eighteen hours in the saddle, the cool air of Hermon had greatly revived me. But I had little time to rest. At midnight a messenger brought me a hastily-written note from Shahîn, the head of the Protestant community, imploring me to return immediately, wherever I might be when overtaken by the messenger. The "society of young men" had risen in arms, and, encamping on the hill south of the town, had sent to Shahîn a written order to leave the place before three o'clock, or they would kill him.

In a few minutes I was on my horse, and, by riding hard, reached the town early in the morning. The place seemed deserted. The shops were shut, and neither friend nor foe appeared in the streets. The Protestants had all escaped, and the other party had made a warlike incursion against some Bedawîn who had invaded the harvest-fields of the Hûleh; so that there were but few men in the town.

I found a note awaiting me from Shahîn, begging me to join them at their rendezvous, some five hours to the north, on the top of Jebel ed Dahar. In the course of the day I made a formal call at the palace, to put matters on the best footing now possible with the governing emîr. I found him in full conclave with other emîrs of his family, and many of the "old men" of the town, both Druse and Christian. The governor was much disturbed by what had taken place, and I could see very plainly that he had more than one cause of uneasiness. The expulsion, by a self-constituted "society of young men," of so large a number of tax-payers, would assuredly bring upon him the displeasure of the Government; and it was evident also that the emîr regarded both with fear and hatred this lawless band of "young men." They had actually usurped all authority, so that, when he attempted to imprison one of them, they rose in a body and rescued him. I foresaw trouble ahead; but, taking a courteous leave of the assembly, and requesting the emîr to protect the Protestant women and children, I returned to complete my arrangements to join the fugitives.

Notes were brought in secretly from time to time, warning me that the regular road was patrolled by armed men, and mentioning a secluded path by which I must come. Late in the evening, when the town had become quiet, we mounted our horses, and, ascending the steep hill north of the place, were soon joined by one and then another of our community, who had stationed themselves along the way to see that all was right and safe. With this friendly escort we escaped, and crossed the deep gorge of the Hasbâny some distance above the great fountain of el Fauwâr; and, after a fatiguing ride of five hours and a hard climb up the mountain, we discovered, on the very summit of the Dahar, a faint light. One of our men fired a gun; and the signal being answered in the same way, we hurried on to the rendezvous of the fugitive band.

It was nearly daybreak; and, after partaking of some refresh-ment, we united in worship appropriate to the critical condition of our affairs. The occasion was wholly peculiar, as were all our surroundings; and I shall never forget that "morning prayer-meeting" on the top of the mount. The harsh, loud voices of those fugitives for conscience' sake rang out full and firm upon the morning air in prayer and in praise, with many an echo responsive from the beetling cliffs of ancient Lebanon. Disturbed and frightened by such unwonted music, the shepherd's dog at the watch-fire far away on the mountain-side bayed fiercely in chorus with the wail of the jackal and the howl of the wolf; and old Hermon heard, as he lifted up his head amongst the waning stars; and, above all, He who sits beyond the stars heard that morning psalm.

We continued our flight, and crossed the Lîtâny at Jisr Kŭrûn, and passing over the Lebanon at Thugaret B'maria, spent the night at el Mukhtârah, where the whole party were hospitably entertained by Sa'îd Beg Jemblât. The next day we reached the mission-station at 'Abeih. There the refugees were safe, and there they had to remain for many a weary month, while their cause was being discussed in the cabinets of kings and emperors on another continent. This story has drawn itself out to an intolerable length, though I have "skipped and skipped again," and scarce retained enough to make it hold together.

We will now pass up the mountain to the north-east, to visit the ruined temple near the village of Hibbârîyeh. The region drained by the Hasbâny, the farthest perennial branch of the Jordan, lying between Mount Hermon and the long ridge, called ed Dahar, west of it, is divided into two districts, lower and upper Wady et Teim. We are now in the lower, or southern, district, whose principal village and seat of government is Hâsbeiya.

This part of the country is well populated, having villages in every direction. One of the most flourishing is Rasheiyet el Fukhkhar, which you can see is finely situated upon the mountain-side on our right. I have spent many a night there, for one of the earliest Protestant communities in this country was established in that village, and a native pastor has been long settled there. The inhabitants are industrious, and celebrated for the manufacture of a coarse earthen-ware which is well adapted to the wants of the country. The people carry their crockery not only to all the fairs in this region, but also to distant towns along the sea-coast, and to villages in the interior. They are well known far into the Haurân, and to "the entrance of Hamath," on the north, and are allowed to pass everywhere unmolested. I have often met their mules and donkeys loaded with large jars, pots, pans, bowls, and plates of a peculiar color and shape, for which they never fail of a market.

The most direct road from here to Hâsbeiya follows the west bank of the Hasbâny to the khân near the source of this picturesque little river, and from thence up the valley eastward to the village. By taking that road one would avoid the broken country on the east, and enjoy a delightful ride of two or three hours, never out of sight, and often within sound, of the musical Hasbâny. The well-wooded ridge rising above it on the west separates the river vale from the fertile plain of Merj 'Ayûn; and upon that ridge are several villages: the largest is el Khiyam, where there is a Protestant congregation and a small church edifice. Villages stand all around Merj 'Ayûn, with most of which I am as familiar as with the towns near my native home. But, as we shall see them on our road to-morrow, I will not mention them now.

That long oak-clad ridge on the west bank of the Hasbâny belongs to Ibl el Hawa, and is one of the largest groves of the kind in this region. Directly opposite opens the wide wady of Shib'a, through which a noisy brook comes rushing down to the Hasbâny from the very snows of Hermon. The temple at Hibbârîyeh, to which we are going, stands facing the tremendous gorge through which that stream descends to the plain from its snowy source, and looking up towards Hermon, as if to catch the first rays of the rising sun over that sublime mountain.

We must turn more to the east, below Râsheiya, and make a considerable descent to reach the temple at Hibbârîyeh. One of the most conspicuous of those rugged pinnacles that guard the approach to Hermon is covered with the ruins, possibly, of a temple, more probably of a convent, called Deir el Mŭtâleîh. I visited the Deir in the depth of winter with Count Schleifin. We had a hard climb of over an hour from the village of Hibbârîyeh to the top of the peak, the last half-hour on foot, over deep snow.

The rock of that outlying pinnacle of Hermon is an intensely hard limestone, which, when struck, gives a highly metallic ring. The crags around the ruins are pointed, grooved, ribbed, and fluted as by the chisel of an architect. I believe that the idea of fluted columns and Gothic turrets was first suggested by such specimens of Nature's architecture. They abound in Upper Lebanon, but I have not seen them in greater perfection than at Mŭtâleîh.

The summit of the peak was once surrounded by a wall, and built over by the halls, corridors, and cells of a convent, as I suppose. I noticed the Greek cross and other conventual indications on some of the stones. What a morbid misanthropy it must have been that induced human beings to retire to such a place, far away from converse with their fellow-men, to dwell amidst savage beasts, and howling blasts, and smothering snow-storms!

Upon a rock smoothed off by the mason's chisel we enjoyed our lunch with keen relish, and for drink we melted the snow of Hermon, and mixed with it some wine from the Count's own vineyards, brought with him from Germany. We then took a long survey of the scene around and beneath. It was in the depth of winter, after a great storm, which had clothed all the mountains in robes of heaven's own lawn, and every feature of the vast and varied panorama stood forth in bold relief. The day, too, was perfect, without wind, cloud, or mist, and I was able to point out to the Count a multitude of sites which he expected to visit.

Through an atmosphere transparent and clear as crystal the most distant objects seemed surprisingly near. Eastward, immediately behind us, were the lower and rough ramparts of Hermon, and above and beyond rose its majestic, snowy crest. Southward, far away, was the high table-land of Bashan, and beyond that the oak-clad hills of Gilead. And the eye ranged over Lake Hûleh and Tiberias, and down the distant valley of the Jordan. We took bearings of Gerizim, above Nâblus; of Tabor, near Nazareth; of Jebel Jermŭk, west of Safed; and of Carmel, south of Acre. By the aid of our glasses the very masts of the vessels in the harbor of Tyre were distinctly seen, and beyond them the blue Mediterranean fading away into the western sky.

Lebanon, to its termination north of the cedars, covered with whitest snow, was seen even more distinctly than lesser objects nearer at hand, but clad in sombre gray. The plain of the Bŭkâ'a to Ba'albek, and northward towards "the entrance of Hamath," formed but one small section of the great map, whilst just beneath us Wady et Teim, upper and lower, lay wedged in between Lebanon and Hermon, but expanding southward into Ard el Hûleh, through which the Hasbâny wends its winding way, now merged in sun-reflecting pools, broad and well-defined, as at el Mellâhah, then reappearing a mere silver stream, wandering at will over a plain of never-fading green. A glorious region is Wady et Teim and Ard el Hûlẹh, where a thousand fountains, and little rills, and many mighty streams make glad the sacred river in which the Son of God was baptized!

Where else will you find another prospect so rich in historic and sacred associations, or so beautiful in itself?

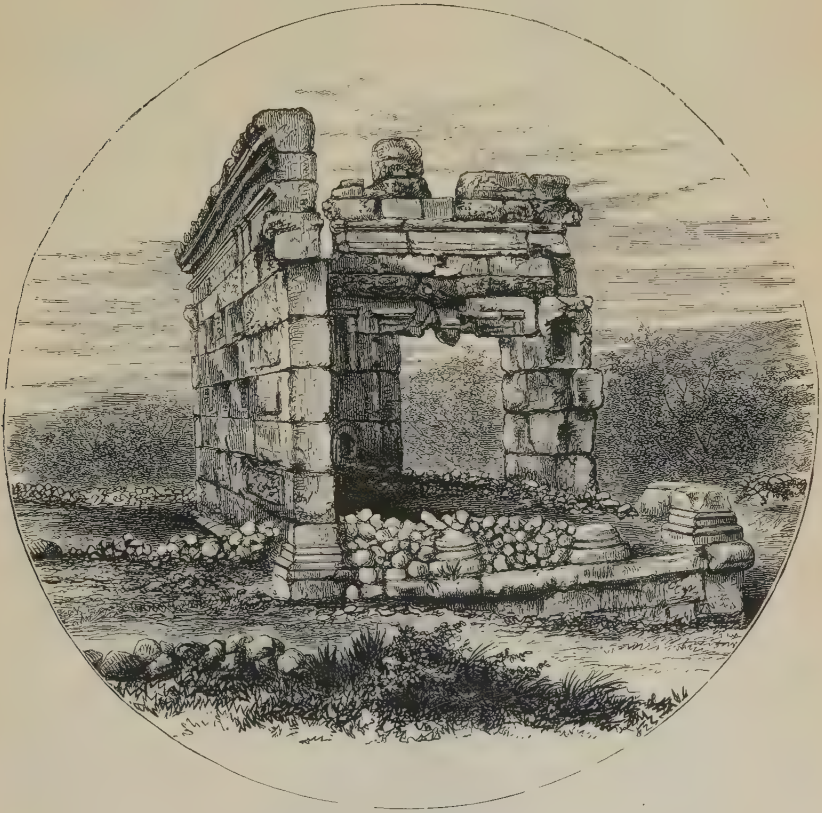
It is a weary ascent to Mŭtâleîh, but he who would see far and wide must climb high. Like all great elevations, however, Mŭtâleîh is solitary and cold.

He who ascends to mountain-tops shall find
The loftiest peaks most wrapt in clouds and snow;
Round him are icy rocks, and loudly blow
Contending tempests
And thus reward the toils which to those summits led.

I would not choose my dwelling-place on that isolated and frosty pinnacle of ambition, too high for fellowship and warm-hearted communion with my brother-man.

As the sun went down, we were glad to leave that frigid isolation. A calm and impressive ride home in the moonlight, amongst those mighty works of God, terminated the day's enjoyment. The shades of evening fell with mystic solemnity over that assemblage of mountain magnificence, filling the hushed spirit with emotions for which language has no name. Judah's royal poet calls upon "mountains and all hills" to praise the Lord. Perhaps the pious thought was suggested during some such twilight ramble. It scarcely needed the aid of imagination to hear Hermon, and all his congregation of hills, and pearly rills, making "a joyful noise unto

God;" singing "forth the honour of his name;" making "his praise glorious" at even-tide; and cold must be the heart that could not join in the general worship.[1] Thus, from those altars not made with hands, let incense and a pure offering ever ascend to God on high. Such a day's converse with the handiworks of the Almighty should make us better men, and more devout.



TEMPLE AT HIBBÂRÎYEH.

Our long descent through the olive groves of Hibbârîyeh has brought us to the temple which we have come to see. It is located below and west of the village near the base of the mountain, and facing the wild gorge of Wady Shib'a, the last place where one would expect to find such a ruin. Captain Warren has made a plan and restoration of that temple from careful data laid down at the time of his visit to Mount Hermon. The north side of the temple has nearly gone, but the southern is almost entire; and I made the whole of its length fifty-nine feet, and the breadth is thirty-one feet. The east side, or that which faces the mouth of Wady esh Shib'a, is almost broken down; the western, however, is quite perfect. The plan of the building is easily made out. It was divided into three unequal parts. The most eastern was the portico, fifteen and a half feet deep; and the entrance was between the two round columns, which are now prostrate among the fallen ruins. The portico was separated from the nave, or body of the temple, by a thick wall, having a wide door in the middle. The nave was about twenty-eight feet deep, and reached to a slightly elevated part at the west end, which corresponds to the chancel. It was eleven feet deep, and, with portico and nave, makes up fifty-four and a half feet. This allows more

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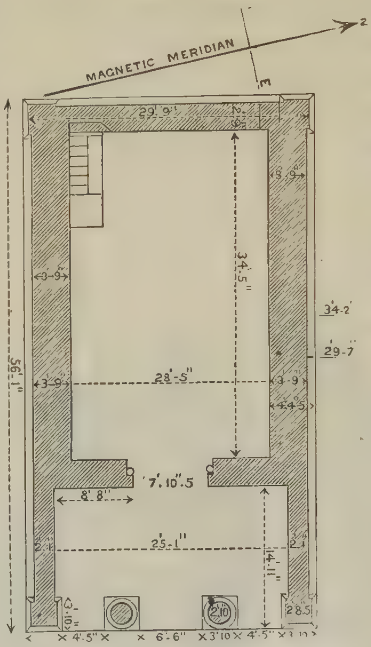
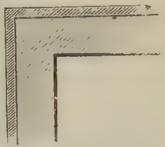
[1] Psa. lxvi. 1, 2.

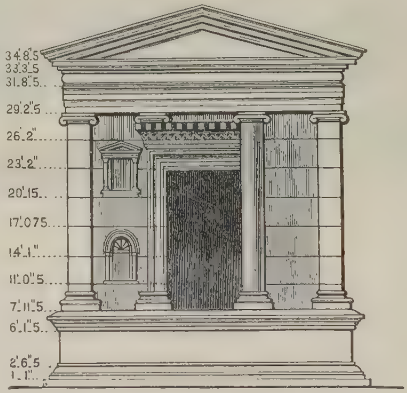
SKETCH OF VOLUTES ON THE ANTÆ.



PLAN OF THE TEMPLE AT HIBBÂRÎYEH.
Scale, twenty feet to one inch, $\frac{1}{240}$.



SKETCH OF SAMPLE OF BEVELLED STONES.



TEMPLE AT HIBBÂRÎYEH.
EAST FRONT, RESTORED.
Scale, twenty feet to one inch, $\frac{1}{240}$.

than three feet and a half for the thickness of the walls. Some of the stones are large—one measuring fifteen feet in length, and two feet nine inches square—and all were exceedingly well cut, squared, and laid up.

I noticed also that on the inside there were large additions to the thickness of the walls, particularly in the nave and chancel; so that while the interior width of the portico was nearly twenty-five feet, that of the nave was twenty-one and a half, and the chancel was barely eighteen and a half feet wide. There was a handsome frieze and a double cornice, separated by a heavy bead; and at the corners were pilasters with Ionic capitals. The whole temple was simple, chaste, and finely executed. On the wall separating the portico from the nave there were two niches, probably for statues; and the key-stone of the arch over the entrance to the nave has sunk down, and may soon fall.

That description will serve, with but slight modifications, for similar temples found upon and around Mount Hermon. If the Greeks did not erect this one, and most of the other temples in this region, they, according to their custom, placed their marks upon them in the form of inscriptions. On one of the fallen stones, in the interior of this temple at Hibbârîyeh, is a Greek inscription, but too much defaced to reveal anything of its history. I suppose that most of these shrines were consecrated to the worship of the sun, under the character of Baal.

About a mile south of Hibbârîyeh are the ruins of a town formerly called Kefr Hâbûr, but now known as Bâb el Hâd. It must have been a place of some importance, but it has been for a very long time utterly deserted. The remains of part of a temple are visible, and fragments of columns and large, well-cut stones are scattered over the face of the hill. I measured one of the stones, and found it nearly eleven feet long. There are foundations of similar edifices south and south-west of Râsheiya.

As we are to pass through the village of Hâsbeiya and visit the large fountain called Neb'a el Fauwâr below it, on our way to the tents at Khân Hâsbeiya, we can linger no longer about this ancient temple. The road we must now follow descends towards the north-west, through noble olive groves, into Wady Shib'a. After that, a long ascent will lead us to the top of the ridge on whose northern slope Hâsbeiya is built.

What is that curious collection of houses on the top of that hill to our left?

It is called Khŭlwât el Biyâd, and is, perhaps, the most sacred sanctuary, or "solitude," of the Druses.

Surrounded and half-concealed by a grove of oak and other trees, it certainly is a lonely and rather suspicious-looking place.

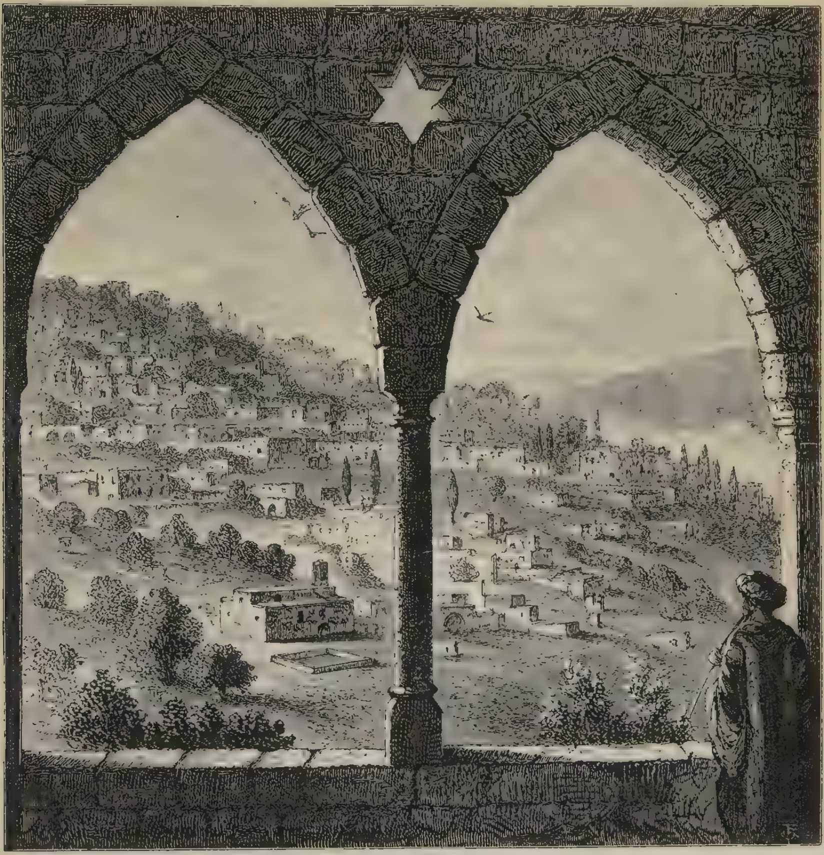
The 'ukkâl, or initiated men of the Druse community, occupy it exclusively. The women of their families come up from Hâsbeiya, and keep house for the men during the day, but return to that village in the evening, as they are not allowed to reside in the Khŭlwât. Those old sheikhs would receive us most courteously, but oblige us also to remain there, partaking of their hospitality, much longer than would be convenient. They would assure us that the Druses are all English, and that even in religion they are in perfect accord with us.

Khŭlwât el Biyâd was formerly the literary and religious centre of the Druse community. There were held their most secret conclaves, and there, too, was the chief depository of their sacred books. It was from that place that Khlât Bey, the chief physician of Muhammed 'Aly, obtained several sets of those books, when the Khŭlwât were plundered by the soldiers of Ibrahim Pasha in 1838. He sent some to Paris, and from them M. de Sacy compiled the two volumes of his work on the religion of the Druses. They are not a little tedious—the books, I mean—but they will be read with profit by those who desire to obtain information regarding the religious rites and the strange beliefs of this remarkable people.

It has taken us an hour and a quarter to ride from Hibbârîyeh to the top of this ridge, down whose steep declivities spreads out northward the rambling village of Hâsbeiya. The houses are half-concealed amidst the vineyards and terraces of olive, fig, mulberry, and other trees; and, being thus isolated one from another, the space occupied by the village is out of all proportion to the number of the inhabitants. In its most prosperous days the population of the place did not exceed seven thousand, but since its destruction in 1860 it is said to have decreased to five thousand.

More than three-fourths of the inhabitants, including the Protestants, are Christians; the rest Druses, Moslems, and Jews.

Wady el Bŭsîs, which descends westward to the Hasbâny, divides the village into two parts, the largest being on the southern side of the wady. This long, low building on our left is the market-place; the large establishment on our right belongs to the chief Druse sheikh; below it, on the north-east, is the Protestant church; and lower down, in the valley, is the Greek church. The bold cliff that overhangs the wady is crowned with the large and rambling palaces of the Shehâb emîrs.



HÂSBEIYA.

I notice that many of the houses that were burnt in the war still lie in ruins, a sad and melancholy spectacle, and the first of the kind we have seen in our travels.

The main reason for this scene of former desolation is owing to the fact that the inhabitants belonged to the various Christian sects, and, as the men were mostly massacred during the war, the survivors could not be induced to return. Many of the bereaved widows with their children settled elsewhere. It is not probable, therefore, that Hâsbeiya will soon regain its former prosperity.

I should like to hear something about that rambling old palace, and its connection with the horrible massacres of 1860.

I never speak of it, look at it, or think about it without a shudder, and therefore respond to your request with reluctance. That palace has been a den of robbers and murderers for many generations. Terrible domestic tragedies have been enacted in its dark vaults, and the very stones in its pavements have been stained with human blood. The Moslem emîrs of the house of Shehâb have governed the districts of Wady et Teim, Upper and Lower, for more centuries than any royal family in Europe has sat upon the throne of empire; and their history, so far as known, has been one long chronicle of treachery and crime. But with this we have no concern further than to notice that such a career, sooner or later, works the downfall and ruin of those who follow it, as it has done to the house of Shehâb.

What became of the "society of young men," who drove the Protestants out of Hâsbeiya?

Having accomplished that exploit, with which they were greatly elated, they proceeded to establish a kind of republic, elected their own officers, and carried matters with a high hand, setting the local government at defiance, and usurping all authority in the district. Their insolence soon became intolerable not only to the emîrs, but the Druses also, and even the Government. Of course, these united to disband them; but, as they were countenanced by some of the most dreaded foreign powers, the Turkish Government adopted the usual course of diplomatic treachery in this land.

Certain Druse sheikhs, who had fled into the Haurân on account of their bloody doings in Lebanon, were allowed to gather as many followers as they could from that wild and lawless region. The Druses of Hâsbeiya and its neighborhood united with them, and the Christians, aware of the plot, left the town and encamped, under the direction of the leaders of the "young men's society," at the khân where we are to spend the night.

There the Druses, commanded by Sheikh Nâsîf Abu Nekad, their most famous warrior, assaulted and quickly sent them flying in terror along the high ridge of ed Dahar, which divides the gorge of the Lîtâny from the valley of the Hasbâny.

The occupation of the khân by the Christians was a fatal blunder. They should have marched northward, up Wady et Teim, so as to keep open communication with their brethren of Zahleh, where only they could have found an asylum in case of defeat. Owing to this miserable error, the routed Christians had to fight their way for two days up the valley, out into the Bŭkâ'a, and northward to Zahleh. Many of them were overtaken and killed, and those who escaped that fate were plundered and beaten without mercy by the Moslems of the region through which they had to effect their escape. Thus the "society of young men," whose being, end, and aim was to resist the Gospel, was scattered to the winds, and many of its leaders were murdered and numbered with the dead.

The few Protestants who had returned to Hâsbeiya took no part in any of these intrigues, and were allowed to remain in the town unmolested. As had been the custom for a long time in this singularly misgoverned country, the consular representatives of certain European powers interfered in behalf of those Hâsbeiyan refugees, and they were again restored to their homes. Our own work was resumed quietly, and the Protestants were acknowledged as a distinct community by the Government. A church was organized; a substantial church edifice was erected; and a native pastor, Rev. John Wortabet, M.D., now professor in the medical department of the Syrian Protestant College at Beirût, was settled over them. The work was committed to the native community, and thenceforward we visited the place only on special occasions. Matters continued thus until the year 1859.

The jealousies and hatred between the Christians of this region and all other sects—Druses, Metâwileh, and Moslems—remained unabated, and there were external influences constantly at work, both from the Turkish authorities and others, which greatly contributed to intensify those dangerous passions. Murders, robberies, and partial outbreaks in different places became frequent, and in the spring of 1860 the conflagration burst out with unprecedented fury. As against the Christians it was not a struggle for power merely, but a conflict of extermination. The fanatical spirit of the Moslem population had been secretly fomented by Turkish pashas and ulema, and the contest assumed the character of a religious war. The Christians were no match for such a ruinous combination, and were everywhere quickly defeated. Those of Hâsbeiya, aware that they could not defend themselves, applied to the Government for protection, and a Turkish garrison was sent both to Hâsbeiya and Râsheiya, but in cruel treachery and with secret instructions, as subsequent events proved, to aid in their destruction.

The troops sent to Hâsbeiya occupied the old palace, and when the town was surrounded by Druses the Christians took refuge in it under the pledged word of 'Othmân Aga, commander of the troops, to protect them, if they would surrender their arms to him. This they unhappily did, and then commenced a scheme of dark and diabolical treachery that has few parallels. The Druses were allowed to burn and pillage the town, and to roam unmolested through the surrounding villages, destroying everything before them. The wretched inhabitants fled from the villages to that palace and surrendered to 'Othmân Aga, and in some cases were aided to do so by detachments of soldiers.

All, as they entered, were obliged to give up their arms, and in this manner the palace became crowded with defenceless victims. There they were detained, with scarcely anything to eat, for some eight days, until they became utterly exhausted; while their enemies were allowed to range and howl around the palace like incarnate fiends during all those dismal days and nights, and keep up an incessant alarm. Then, towards the memorable evening of June 11th, the gates were thrown open to the Druses, who rushed in with swords, axes, hatchets, guns, and pistols, and enacted a scene of indiscriminate butchery which beggars all description. The Turkish soldiers were stationed on the stairways that led up from the great court, where the Christians had been confined, and when any attempted to flee by that way they pitched them down to the butchers below on the points of their bayonets.

I have a long and minute account of that massacre by a native Protestant teacher, who was preserved in the house of a Druse Sit, or princess, but I have no heart to translate, or even re-read it. It is impossible to ascertain the exact number of the victims. An English gentleman, who visited the palace some weeks after, informed me that he saw twelve hundred bodies lying in that slaughter-house, just as they had fallen, heaps upon heaps, under the axe or the sword of those bloody demons. Owing probably to previous emaciation, and to the blood being drained from the bodies by the manner of death, those corpses shrank to mere skeletons, and the sight is said to have been indescribably horrible.

It is but a miserable satisfaction to know that, through the indignant remonstrances of such men as Lord Dufferin and his associates of the European Commission, sent by the Five Powers to investigate those and other like atrocities, the Turkish Government was compelled to condemn and execute 'Othmân Aga and his most guilty associates in that foul tragedy.

Some of the leading Protestants perished in that massacre. It was not the intention of the Druse leaders to murder them, but, in an evil hour, most of them had been led to identify themselves with their fellow-townsmen, and with them had taken refuge in the palace, under the guarantee of the Turkish troops and their commander. By some of the Druse sheikhs repeated efforts had been made to induce them to leave the palace before the massacre commenced. They, however, dared not confide in their promised protection, but preferred to remain under that of the Government troops, and thus they shared the fate of the rest.

These wars, burnings, and massacres on Lebanon and Hermon bear a singular resemblance to those which occurred in Biblical times. This sad narrative reminds me of the destruction which befell poor Laish, down yonder, at Tell el Kâdy, when that company of "angry fellows" came up by stealth from near Jaffa and burnt it with fire, and massacred all the inhabitants; or that bloody sacrifice of Baal's priests by Jehu in Samaria; or what those two sons of Jacob did to Shechem in their anger—a deed remembered long after by Jacob, and bitterly cursed on his death-bed.[1]

It is undoubtedly true that this country has been the theatre, in past ages, both before and since the Christian era, of an almost endless number of similar tragedies. This has been owing mainly to the peculiar nature and position of the country itself, and to the number of antagonistic sects, tribes, and fragments of tribes that have inhabited it. Nor is the resemblance limited to the mere recurrence of such catastrophes; it is carried still farther by the rapid restoration of the people, and the rebuilding of their desolated homes. Almost the next page in the history, after the conquests of Joshua, shows that many of the towns captured by him had been rebuilt by their former inhabitants. Even Hazor, which probably stood on one of those pinnacles overlooking the Hûleh, and which Joshua burnt with fire, was soon after sufficiently powerful grievously to oppress its conquerors.[2]

Thus has it been with the contending Arab tribes during the forty years of my acquaintance with them. And at this hour remnants of Christian populations in all these mountains are rapidly recovering from their crushing disasters; and if matters progress, as they are likely to do, for a few years longer, they will be in position to renew the contest; and, unless restrained by a better government than that of the Turk, they will assuredly make the attempt, and with greater fury than ever. These people now dwell together in apparent amity, just as the Jebusites did with the Hebrews at Jerusalem, the Amorites in the valley of Jezreel, and the Canaanites in Naphtali and Asher; but the desire and determination to retaliate burn like a smouldering volcano, ready to burst out on the first favorable occasion.

The rough and rocky descent of half an hour from the village of Hâsbeiya has brought us to this noble fountain, called Neb'a el Fauwâr, the spring-head of the Hasbâny, and the most distant permanent source of the Jordan.

How quietly the water flows out into the pool from the base of the cliff above it! And the miniature lake itself is prettily bor-

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[1] Judg. xviii. 26–28; 2 Kings x. 18–28; Gen. xlix. 5–7.

[2] Josh. xi. 10, 11; Judg. iv. 2, 3.

NEB'A EL FAUWÂR—SOURCE OF THE HASBÂNY.

dered with oleander bushes in full bloom. To judge from the height of the bridge, a short distance below the dam that forms the pool, and over which the water falls in one transparent sheet, the river Hasbâny must at times be greatly swollen by tributary streams from the mountains above and north of this fountain.

During the rainy season it is, but still this is the permanent source of the Hasbâny. Even now you will find the channel above this fountain quite dry. But the whole western and northern face of these mountains, the eastern slope of the ridge called ed Dahar, and the broad intervening space between the two for more than twenty miles north of Hâsbeiya, is drained into this channel; and I have at times found the Hâsbany an unfordable river.

Nor is this entirely confined to the rainy season proper. This elevated district, lying in between the lofty ranges of Lebanon and Hermon, is frequently visited by astonishing seils, or cloud-bursts. Several years ago one occurred here in midsummer, which sent down that channel, in an incredibly short time, such a deluge that it overflowed the highest arch of the bridge, and carried destruction through the gardens and mulberry terraces between this and the khân, and the same was repeated during another summer not many years past. I was once caught in a seil that struck the ridge between Hibbârîyeh and Hâsbeiya, and shall long remember the blinding lightning, the deafening thunder, the torrents of rain, the plunging cataracts, and the wild uproar around me.

No tempest in any land can be prosaic, least of all in this country. I have seen storms rage round Hermon than which nothing could be more grand or sublime. Enormous volumes of vapor, black as "the raven of separation," came rolling down the gorges, with thick darkness under them. The storm-demon was abroad upon the wings of the wind, tearing to tatters the clouds on the ragged ramparts. Numberless torrents leaped as in terror from every cliff and crag, while the "live thunder" rocked the everlasting hills to their foundations. Such a scene of wind and rain, pelting hail, blazing lightning, and crashing thunder, may well appall the stoutest heart.

The phenomena of storms furnished the sacred poet, and inspired prophet with their most sublime and awful imagery: "Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken. He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet. And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed, hail stones and coals of fire. The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire. Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them. Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils. He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters."[1]

This visit to Neb'a el Fauwâr recalls the memory of a pleasant day spent here many years ago with the children of the survivors of the Protestant community that had gradually returned to Hâsbeiya after the massacres of 1860. They had arranged to have a school festival at this fountain, and when I arrived the boys and girls with their teachers were resting under one of the arches of the bridge, and singing in their native language some of their favorite hymns. I wished that the authors of those hymns, such as "Joyfully, joyfully," and "I want to be an Angel," could have heard their sweet lays sung by a hundred happy voices, with the musical ripple of the flowing river for an accompaniment.

It was not all singing, however, for plenty of bread and leben, olives and halâweh, and an abundance of fresh fruit had been provided, while a fat goat was sacrificed for the occasion. This "meat offering" was an institution peculiarly Hâsbeiyan. The large goat, purchased and slaughtered on the spot, was hung by its hind feet to a branch of a mulberry-tree; small portions of its flesh were then cut off and handed to each child on a thin loaf of bread, who ran off with it to a large fire, where the elderly women sprinkled over it salt and pepper, and broiled it on the coals. The child then sat down on the ground, with the bread for table and plate, and its fingers for knife and fork. The Hasbâny afforded plenty of water to drink, and many of the little ones ate their extemporized lunch seated on the bank, with their feet dabbling in the stream.

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[1] Psa. xviii. 7–16.

In the afternoon the scholars and their teachers were grouped on the rocks, above and about the fountain, and a photograph taken of the scene. The view was up the river from the south-west, to where the Hasbâny rises at the base of the cliff, opposite which the children stood. The broad sheet of water falling over the mill-dam, and the rugged crags beyond and above, added picturesqueness to the scene; but the beautiful oleanders, in full bloom of floral glory, which surrounded the fountain, were entirely lost to the view.[1]

Just before sunset the different schools of boys and girls passed in review before us, and returned to their homes amongst the ruins of the once prosperous town of Hâsbeiya.

We will now follow down the bank of the river to our tents, which we will find pitched just above it and near Khân Hâsbeiya. It is an hour's easy ride, with this well-watered and fertile vale of the Hasbâny below us on our left.

May 21st. Evening.

Our rides during the last few days have been around the region of the Hûleh and through the district of Lower Wady et Teim, the special domain of the exalted majesty of Hermon; and as we turn southward, to-morrow, we shall see nothing of the northern district of that wady. It would be pleasant to traverse the entire region drained by the tributaries of the Jordan, above and north of Neb'a el Fauwâr, but the limitation of our journey will not allow us to make that excursion.

Upper Wady et Teim includes the western side and northern end of Hermon, and also the elevated volcanic plateau between it and the ridge of ed Dahar, which separates it from the wild gorge of the Lîtâny and Southern Lebanon. Many parts of that district are sparsely inhabited, and it is chiefly interesting to the traveller from the number of ruined temples found there. Of some of these I can give you a general description; and having examined the remains of the one at Hibbârîyeh, you can readily form a satisfactory idea of the others, since they were all of the same order of architecture and constructed after nearly the same plan.

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[1] See illustration facing page 506.

The first temple north of Hâsbeiya is above 'Ain Hŭrsheh, a village situated high up the western side of one of the outlying ramparts of Hermon. Captain Warren says that the temple is three thousand six hundred feet above the Mediterranean, and faces due east. It is very small, but in good preservation; the walls, however, are a good deal shaken, apparently by earthquakes. "It is of the Ionic order; length forty-two feet, breadth twenty-four feet, height nineteen feet to the top of the cornice. The temple rests on a stylobate eight feet high. On the cornice on each side are three heads—two lions, and a tiger in the middle. On the west, on the tympanum, is the bust of a woman in bass-relief; she has two small horns on her head, as in the figures of Venus at Cyprus." Below this, about the centre of the west-end wall, is a right-angled triangle, apparently the model of a temple.

There is a Greek inscription on the rocks which has some historic value, since the name of Zenodorus occurs in it. That person was celebrated throughout this region in the time of Herod the Great, chiefly for his connection with the robbers of the Trachonites, as we learn from Josephus.[1]

About three hours to the north-west from 'Ain Hŭrsheh, on the east side of the ridge of ed Dahar, is the temple at Thelthâtha, a Moslem village with a wely called Neby Sŭfa. Captain Warren accompanies his carefully prepared plans of that temple with the following description:

"The temple has very little remaining *in situ* except on the northern side, and a good deal appears to have fallen in the last ten years. The men at the village said they had tumbled over a great portion lately. The temple lies east and west, the entrance towards the east. Height above mean sea level three thousand seven hundred and eighty feet. The temple is *in antis*, and measures in length seventy-two feet seven inches, and in breadth thirty-five feet one inch, including the projections of the antæ. Height from the cornice to the platform of the stylobate, thirty-four feet four inches. The pronaos is fourteen feet four inches by thirty feet, the cella is about forty-eight feet by twenty-three feet nine inches. The cella is raised at its western end six feet above the

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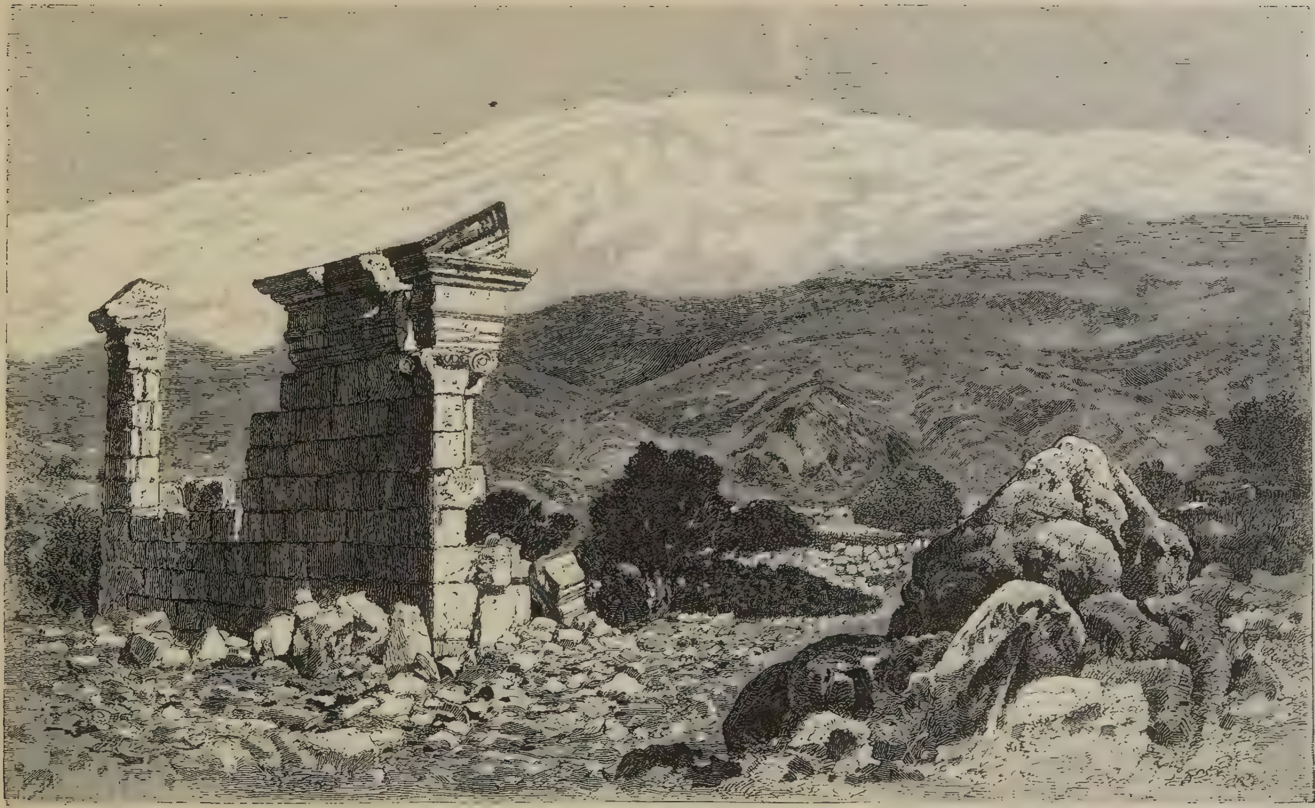
[1] Ant. xv. x. 12.



RUINED TEMPLE AT THELTHÁTHA. JEBEL ESH SHEIKH—MOUNT HERMON.

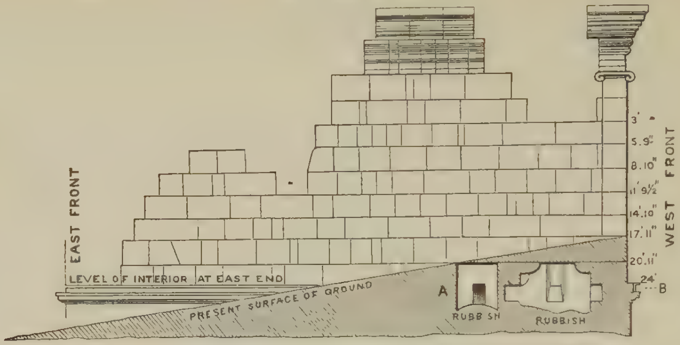
floor of the temple. This raised portion extends from the western wall towards the east for about nineteen feet, and below it are chambers.

"These chambers may have been used as store-rooms; they are furnished with niches, and one of them also appears to have acted as a passage to allow the priests to enter the temple secretly. For this purpose there is a door on the south side of the temple in the stylobate; this opens through a wall three feet nine inches thick into a chamber twenty-two feet seven inches long and nine feet wide. At the end of this chamber to the north is a staircase (now walled up) leading to the raised platform above; the side of the temple to the east is then increased by three feet, to allow of the stairs. The side-walls of the temple in other places are five feet seven inches in thickness."

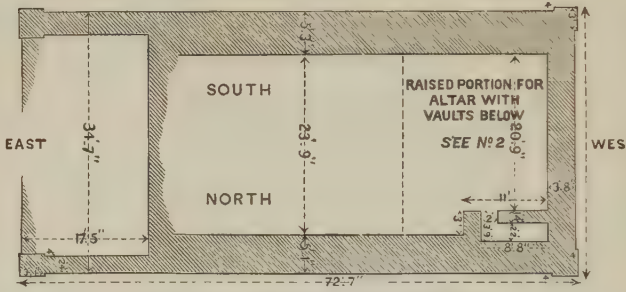
There are two niches in each of the walls, and an opening in the east wall leading to "small chambers covered over by great flat slabs. In the larger chamber, where the width is nine feet, corbels are used for supporting the flat slabs of the roof. These slabs are probably not less than nine feet long; they vary in width from four to five feet, and are perhaps two feet six inches to three feet in thickness. In most of the temples the arch is used instead of corbels and flat stones."

Like most of the temples on Hermon, it is of the Ionic order, and stands on a stylobate which projects slightly beyond the walls. There are nine courses of stone above the stylobate, each three feet high, and the entablature is seven feet five inches high, which makes the whole elevation, from the ground to the roof, including the stylobate, forty feet. The stone of which the walls were constructed is the ordinary blue limestone of the country, quarried from the mountain, very hard and compact, and hence much of the work remains as perfect as when the temple was first erected.

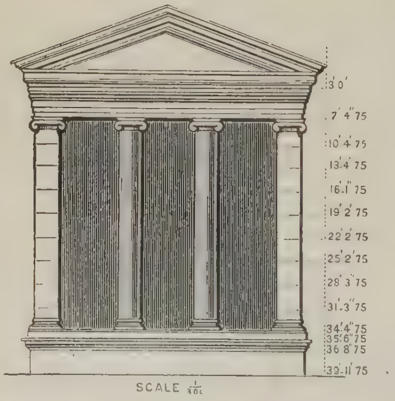
The surrounding region is desolate and wild, but the view from the temple of the northern end of Hermon is grand and imposing. The site may have been selected with reference to this fact; for, as the entrance to these edifices was from the east, the followers of Baal, to whom, I suppose, these temples were dedicated, would daily catch the first and last rays of the Sun-god, as they lit up or faded



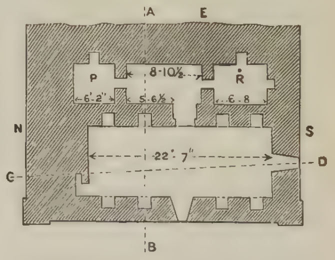
ELEVATION OF THE NORTHERN SIDE OF THE TEMPLE.



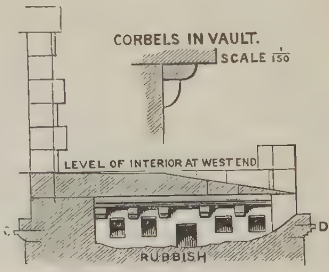
PLAN OF THE TEMPLE AT THELTHÂTHA.



RESTORED ELEVATION OF THE EAST FRONT OF THE TEMPLE.



PLAN OF WESTERN END.



ELEVATION OF WESTERN END.

away from the majestic brow of Hermon, and thus solemnly observe the moment for their morning and evening worship. "The sunset hues of Hermon," says Canon Tristram, "were magnificent —the evening glow, the death-like pallor, and the darkness relieved by the snow, in quick succession."

The principal town of Upper Wady et Teim is Râsheiyet el Wady, located near the northern base of Hermon, at an elevation of about four thousand feet above the sea; and Hermon, covered with snow in the winter, rises more than five thousand feet above it. There, during the massacres of 1860, nearly a thousand Christians from the town took refuge in the palace of the old emîrs. It is needless to add that they were all put to death. As none but the saddest memories haunt that castellated palace, we will pass on for about three miles farther east to 'Aiha, a small Druse hamlet, where there was another ancient temple. "Nothing is now visible of the temple," says Captain Warren, "excepting the western end and part of the stylobate. The breadth of the temple, including the projection of the antæ, would have been thirty-seven feet eight inches. The entrance was towards the east.

"Houses are built over the site of the temple, and in one place the stylobate can be traced for forty-seven feet where it is now used as a stable. An entrance through this leads into vaulted chambers full of grain, and here we were not allowed to remain, for fear of setting the place on fire. Lying near the temple is what appears to be a Corinthian frieze. There are also bits of architrave and other mouldings. A column lying near measures three feet three inches in diameter. A stone with a Greek inscription is built into the west wall." An impressive testimony these to the transitory nature of man's elaborate works:

Two or three columns and many a stone,
Marble and granite with grass overgrown—
Remnants of things that have passed away,
Fragments of stone reared by creatures of clay.

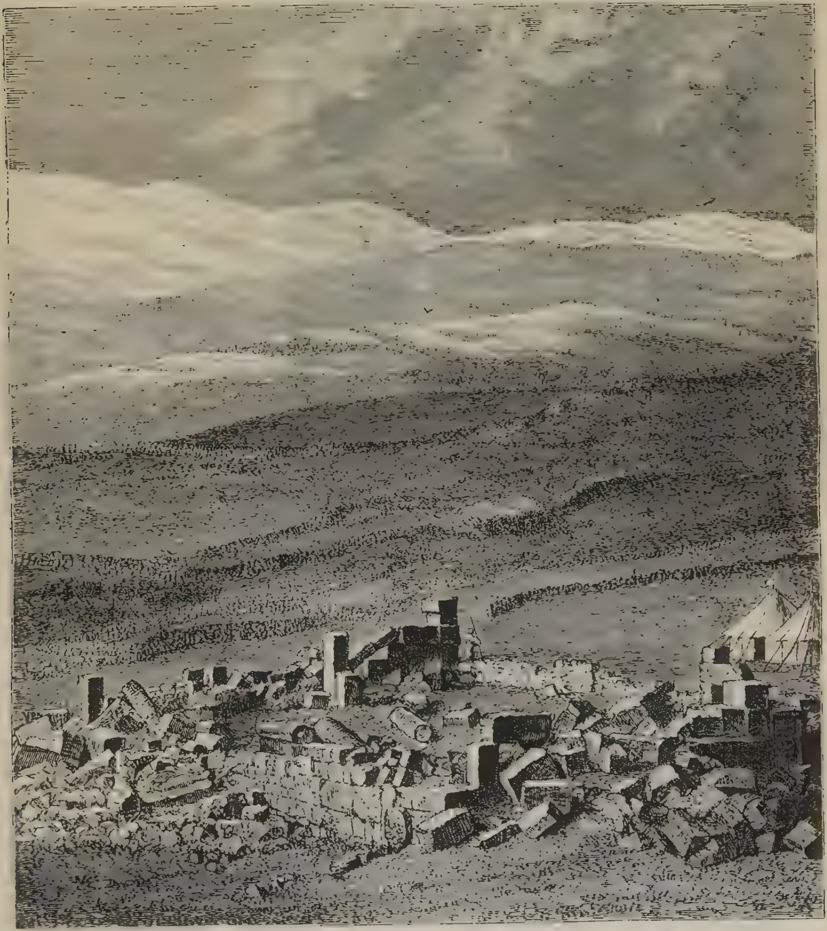
Below the temple at 'Aiha, to the north-east, is a circular depression or basin, which is a small lake in winter, but in summer a fertile plain. It is cultivated by the inhabitants of Kefr Kûk. In and about that village are some columns and other indications of ancient remains, with a few Greek inscriptions. That is the last village on the regular road over Hermon to Damascus. After a steep ascent from it up the north-eastern ridge of Hermon, a road takes off to the south-east, and leads, in about two hours, to Rŭkhleh. Captain Warren describes the temples at that place and their ruins very fully.

"Rŭkhleh lies in a nook in the hills. Height, about four thousand seven hundred and eighty feet above mean sea level. There are here the remains of two temples, about one hundred and fifty yards apart; the upper one, to the south-west, is a shapeless mass of ruins; but there are Greek inscriptions lying about. The lower temple, to the north-east, is that which has been described by Burckhardt and others. This temple, which was once a very handsome structure, is now very difficult to examine, because it has had an apse stuck on to the eastern end; and the architrave of the original entablature appears to have been used to form door-jambs for the west end of the altered building.

"The impression I have is, that it originally was a temple, with entrance to east, and afterwards turned into a church, with entrance to west. This is a very important point, as it is probable that the finding of this temple with entrance to west, while temples west of Hermon have their entrances to east, may have first given rise to the idea of Hermon being the Kibleh of these temples. It is to be observed that the other temples near Rŭkhleh—viz., Deir el Ashayir and 'Aiha—have their entrances to east, as have all other temples I have seen in the country on both sides of Jordan.

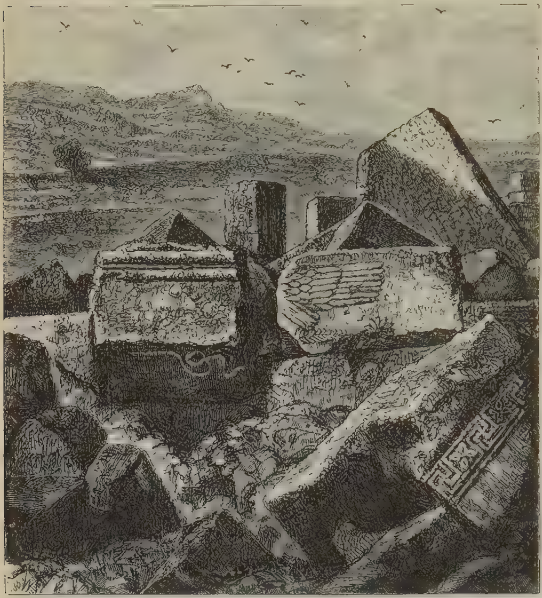
"The temple as it now stands is from fifty-six to fifty-nine feet broad, and measures eighty-two feet ten inches from the west end up to where the apse commences; but there are traces of the wall having continued farther east by eighteen feet. Little more than one course of the wall still remains above-ground, and it seems doubtful if any of it is *in situ*, except the portion of the antæ at the north-west angle. The face is well described by Dr. Robinson, and he suggests it may have been that of Baal; however that may be, it is not likely that it was originally in its present position, just where the cornice of the stylobate would have been.

The eagle was not seen by Dr. Robinson; it is described by Burckhardt. The stone on which it is sculptured is now broken in two, and lies over at an angle so as to be very difficult to find. To me it appears to be of a type essentially Assyrian, and is of a blackish stone (not basalt), quite different to those of the building, and has probably been brought from a distance.



RUINED TEMPLE AT RŬKHLEH.

"The building has two rows of columns running up the interior; there are three in each row, and they are equidistant from each other, and form the outside of the side walls; they are nineteen feet apart from centre to centre; the lower diameter is about two feet eight inches. The capitals are Ionic, and are ornamented below the volutes in a manner similar to those at Deir el 'Ashâyir. The apse measures twenty-two feet five inches across on the inside; it is thirteen feet ten inches deep, and is nearly semicircular on plan; the walls are two feet and five inches thick. Two columns of a larger diameter than those already referred to are cut in for the resting of part of the wall of the apse, and this proves the apse to be of later construction. The diameter of these two columns is three feet two inches.



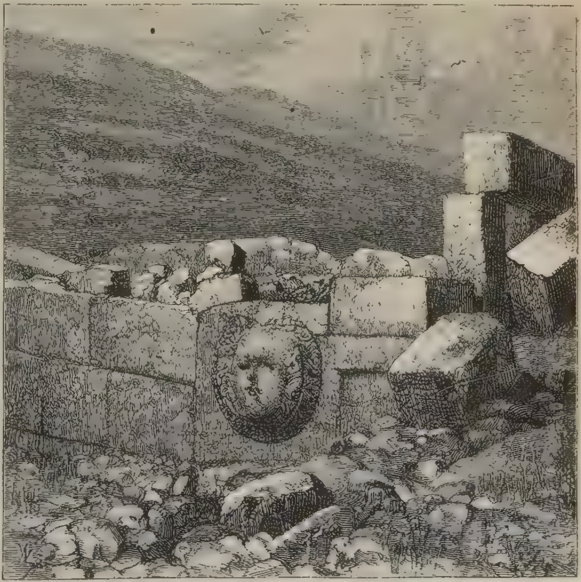
ASSYRIAN EAGLE AT RŬKHLEH.

"On the southern side wall there appears to have been a small door. On the northern side wall débris has accumulated. Perhaps if an excavation was here made the stylobate might be uncovered. Three of the door-jambs are probably formed from the original architrave of the entablature; it appears to have been the lintel of a door-way. Two pieces of stone stand up in an odd, isolated manner a few feet in front of the entrances. They appear to have been part of the entablature. The antæ appear to have been three feet six inches wide at west end; bases, Attic. A restoration could probably be made of the original temple, if some little time was spent in examining the fragments. Close to the eagle there is a Greek inscription."

The face alluded to by Captain Warren is thus described by

Dr. Robinson: "On the outside of the southern wall, near the south-east corner, and just above the ground, is a large block of stone six feet square, having sculptured upon it a huge medallion. It consists of an external circle or ornamented border in relief, five feet in diameter; an inner circle or border in higher relief is four feet in diameter. Within these is a finely carved front view of a human countenance, in still bolder relief. The length of the face from the chin to the top of the hair is three feet four inches, the width two feet four inches. The features have been purposely disfigured, but are still distinct and pleasing. It seemed as if intended for the sun; but the border does not represent rays. It may have been a Baal worshipped in the temple."[1]

Baal and his worship are frequently mentioned in the Bible, and the number of these temples greatly increases one's curiosity in regard to them. Who was Baal?


MEDALLION HEAD AT RŬKHLEH.

Baal was the one supreme god of the Canaanites and Phœnicians, and we know that, from the earliest times, Baal worship was the predominant religion over nearly all of Western Asia. Balak, at the command of Balaam, whom he called out of Mesopotamia to curse Israel, built altars upon the high places of Baal; and the entire narrative in Numbers twenty-second and the following chapters show that his worship was then prevalent throughout the East.[2] The name Baal, and the chief rites and ceremonies of his worship, were of Canaanitish origin; but the word is common to all the Shemitic dialects, and is perpetuated in the language of the peasants who now build their hovels amidst the prostrate ruins of those ancient temples.

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[1] Rob. Res. vol. iii. p. 436.

[2] Numb. xxii. 4–16, 41; xxiii. 1.

From the narrative of the sacrifice on Carmel we gain some insight into the manner of Baal worship. It is evident that there were large numbers of trained priests, who were accustomed to offer bloody sacrifices upon his altars. "Their manner" was to dance around and to leap upon the altar, and cut themselves with knives in fanatical frenzy, and thus astonish and awe the multitude. This has always been the custom in the East, and is perpetuated down to our day in the ordinary Moslem zikr and the less frequent douseh. There were also temples erected for his worship, not only by the Canaanites, Phœnicians, Babylonians, and other heathen nations, but also by the Hebrews. Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, King of the Zidonians, and the unscrupulous wife of the weak Ahab, introduced that worship amongst the Israelites on a magnificent scale, to her own ruin and that of her nation. The impetuous Jehu made his treacherous sacrifices to Baal the opportunity to slaughter the entire priesthood of that god, after which he "brake down the house of Baal, and made it a draught house unto this day."[1]

Is it not certain that human sacrifices were offered to Baal?

Jeremiah upbraids the Jews with this horrible crime: "They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind."[2] There can be no doubt, therefore, but that human sacrifices were offered to Baal even in Jerusalem; and I suppose that the altars of those temples around Hermon were often sprinkled with human blood. Other historians besides Sanchoniathon abundantly establish the fact that those cruel rites were common, not only amongst the Canaanites and Phœnicians, but amongst the various tribes of Arabia.

Are we to suppose that Moloch was another name for Baal?

The rites and ceremonies of his worship seem to have been derived from the same source. Moses repeatedly denounced death upon any Hebrew who should make his seed pass through the fire to Moloch, and yet we find this horrible practice existing even down to the time of Josiah "the good."

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[1] 2 Kings x. 18–28.

[2] Jer. xix. 5.

And because "they have built the high places of Tophet, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my heart. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be called Tophet, nor The valley of the son of Hinnom, but The valley of slaughter."[1] That

> Horrid king besmeared with blood
> Of human sacrifices and parents' tears,
> Though, for the noise of drums and timbrels loud,
> Their children's cries unheard, that passed through fire
> To his grim idol, Him the Ammonite
> Worshipt in Rabba, and her watery plain;
> In Argob, and in Basan, to the stream
> Of utmost Arnon. Nor content with such
> Audacious neighborhood, the wisest heart
> Of Solomon he led, by pride, to build
> His temple right against the temple of God,
> On that opprobrious hill, and made his grove
> The pleasant valley of Hinnom, Tophet thence
> And black Gehenna, called the type of Hell.[2]

There are other temples in the neighborhood of Rŭkhleh well worth examining, as at Burkush and Deir el 'Ashâyir. But I need not describe them now, for we may have an opportunity to visit them hereafter.

There are ruins on one of the three small peaks that together form the summit of Hermon. Have you ever visited them?

I have ascended Hermon several times, from the west, south, east, and north. The easiest way to the summit is from Kŭl'at Jendal, on the east of the mountain; the most romantic path is that from the castle of Bâniâs by Shib'a; the roughest ascent is from Hâsbeiya, and the shortest and steepest climb is from Râsheiyet el Wady. The last time I made the ascent was from that town, prompted thereto by the report of a native who had been up the day before for a load of snow, but was frightened away by finding a family of bears in full possession of the snow on that part of the mountain.

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[1] Jer. vii. 31, 32.

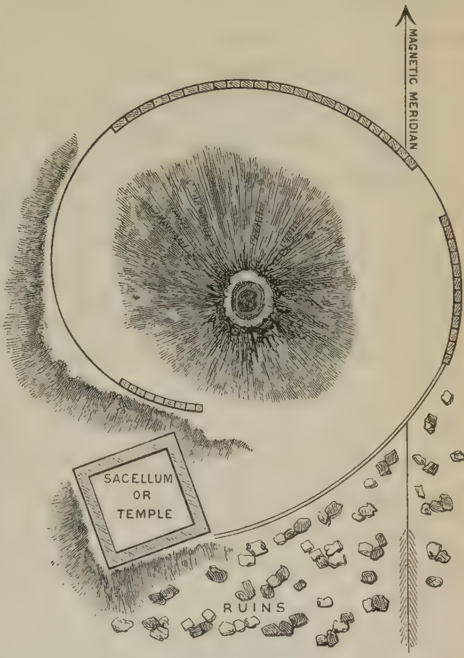
[2] Milton's "Paradise Lost," book i.

In all my previous visits to the summit I had kept a sharp lookout for those animals, but could never catch sight of them, and I was again disappointed. After a hard climb of two hours the snow was reached, and we saw abundant indications of their recent presence there, but no bears. The snow had been trampled about in an extraordinary manner, and though we wandered over the summit for several hours in search of them, they could not be found. It is remarkable that bears were common in Palestine, as far south at least as Bethlehem, when David kept his father's sheep "in the wilderness;" but they have long since disappeared from all parts of the country, excepting the snow-covered summit of Hermon. There, too, they are diminishing in numbers, and will soon become extinct.

The summit of Hermon is a comparatively level plateau of calcareous limestone and small shingle, more than nine thousand feet above the level of the sea, and having three slight eminences several hundred yards from each other, but of nearly equal height. On the peak farthest to the west are the only remains now found upon the summit. They are thus described by Captain Warren:

"On the southern peak there is a hole scooped out of the apex; the foot is surrounded by an oval of hewn stones, and at its southern end is a Sacellum, or temple, nearly destroyed: the latter appears to be of more recent date than the stone oval, and the mouldings on its cornice appear to be Roman. The oval is formed of well-dressed stones from two to eight feet in length, two and a half feet in breadth, and two feet thick; they are laid in a curved line on the ground, and it almost appears as though there had been two courses of these stones. Many of them are *in situ*, others only just overturned, but some have been completely removed. Within [the oval] the peak rises about eighteen feet, and at the apex is a hole cut out like a caldron, nine feet in diameter, and about six feet deep; at the bottom is rubbish, and the true bottom is deeper.

"To the south, and just outside the oval, is the ruin of a rectangular building, whose entrance was to the east; it is thirty-six feet long, and thirty-three feet broad; the shorter sides being east and west. The rock is cut down to receive it, and [in two places] part of the lower portion of the wall appears to be cut out of the rock. The walls are about two and a half feet thick: in some places two courses remain, but in other parts the wall has quite disappeared. On some of the stones a faint marginal draught is seen, but most of the stones are simply well-squared ashlar. The ruins of the temple, for the most part, lie down the hill to the south-east. It is possible that there may have been columns at the entrance, which, if thrown down with the other débris, would most certainly have rolled down the gulley below for at least two thousand feet; but we could find no remains of columns either in the gulley or at the bottom of it.



PLAN OF RUINS ON THE SUMMIT OF HERMON.

"We found two columns at the entrance to a cavern to the north-east, which may have belonged to the Sacellum. This cavern is hewn in the rock, and has its entrance to the east; it is irregular in shape, about thirty feet in diameter, and is about eight feet in height; at the south-west end there is a rock-cut column to support the roof; at the entrance are the frusta of two columns, about nineteen inches in diameter; a sloping ascent leads up to the surface; above is a level platform, sides thirty feet by twenty-six, south-western end cut out of the rock. The stone composing the oval and the building are of the same limestone as the mountain itself. On the western slopes [of Hermon] the shingle is found, lying at an angle of about thirty degrees, so that it is just possible for a man to walk straight up the last one thousand feet. In winter the snow appears to extend down the mountain-side for about five thousand feet; in September very little is left, and this only in the crevices where the sun is unable to penetrate."

Captain Warren informs us that he "found a stone north-west of the oval with a Greek inscription on the face very roughly cut; a squeeze was taken of this," from which, whatever it may have to communicate, may be hereafter ascertained. An effort has recently been made to get possession of the stone, but after having it dragged some distance down the mountain-side the attempt was abandoned. There it will probably soon be buried out of sight by the accumulating débris of the crumbling rock above.

The view from the summit of Hermon is of vast extent. Northward is Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon, with the ruined temple of Ba'albek at its feet, and the plain of the Bŭkâ'a stretching far away "unto the entrance of Hamath." Eastward the city of Damascus, with its gardens and groves, appears surprisingly near, while the prospect fades away over and beyond the Haurân to where earth and sky meet and blend together along the indistinct and hazy horizon of Arabia's boundless desert. Southward lies the plain of the Hûleh, Lake Merom, and the Sea of Galilee; and, farther than the eye can follow, the valley of the Jordan sinks down into the deep chasm of the Dead Sea. The mountains of Bashan and Gilead are there; and westward, across the Jordan, are the hills of Samaria and Galilee, the promontory of Carmel, and the coasts of Tyre and Sidon; while beyond them all is the broad expanse of "the uttermost sea," that "great and wide sea."

Hermon is by far the most conspicuous mountain in the Holy Land: it is visible from nearly every part both east and west of the Jordan. When "Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho: and the Lord shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan," Hermon must have appeared as the one feature on the northern horizon.[1] I have seen it from the shore of the Dead Sea, directly below Mount Nebo. To one sailing from Jaffa towards Tyre, during the winter months, the entire range of Hermon, covered with snow, dominates the view eastward.[2]

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[1] Deut. xxxiv. 1.

[2] See illustration facing page 510.

Hermon, the lofty peak, as its name signifies, formed the northern limit of the Hebrew possessions east of the Jordan. Hence it is often mentioned by the sacred writers, both in history and poetry. It had other names: the Sidonians called it Sirion, and the Amorites called it Shenir. In Deuteronomy iv. 48 the name is Sion, which probably explains the poetic allusion in the one hundred and thirty-third Psalm: "As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion [or Sion]: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." Under certain conditions of the atmosphere the dew of Hermon is remarkably copious, drenching the tents like a heavy rain. The Arabs now call Hermon Jebel esh Sheikh, mountain of the venerable or old man, and also Jebel el Thelj, the snow mountain. These names were suggested by its majestic appearance when covered with snow, just as Lebanon derived its name from the white limestone rock of which it is composed, or from the snow with which it is covered during the winter.

If the Transfiguration took place while our Lord was "in the coasts of Cesarea Philippi," the "high mountain apart" was probably some peak of Hermon—a fact that would impart, if established, paramount interest to that noble mountain. There are many heights above Bâniâs, any one of which would have furnished a lofty isolation and a privacy well adapted to that purpose. But as the accounts of that transcendent occurrence in the Gospel narratives give no topographical indication by which the particular place could be identified, all efforts to ascertain it must prove unavailing. In common with many in our day, I believe that that wonderful display of Christ's glory was actually made on some part of Hermon, but probably not upon the very summit. At any rate, it is more reasonable to believe that on the heights of Hermon, and not upon the top of Tabor, was the scene of the Transfiguration; and that, his work on earth being ended, Jesus came down from that mountain, "and when the time was come that he should be received up" into everlasting glory "he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem."[1]

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[1] Matt. xvii. 1–13; Mark ix. 2–13; Luke ix. 28–36, 51.

XIV.

KHÂN HÂSBEIYA TO SAFED.

Khân Hâsbeiya.—Fortified Caravansaries.—Fair at Sûk el Khân.—Bitumen Wells.—Noah's Ark, the Tower of Babel, the Mother of Moses.—Merj 'Ayûn.—Fatal Windstorm.—The Derdârah.—Er Ruahîneh.—Tell Dibbîn, the City of Ijon.—Source of the Lîtâny.—Meshghûrah.—Gorge of the Lîtâny.—The Kŭweh, the Natural Bridge.—The Lapwings.—The Barada.—Conies.—Eagles.—Biblical Allusions to Eagles.—El Khŭtweh.—Leontes.—Orontes.—Cœle-Syria.—A Railroad to the Euphrates.—Northern Boundary of the Promised Land.—The Arkites.—Asher and Zidon.—Judeideh.—Kŭl'at esh Shŭkîf.—Jezzar Pasha.—Ploughs and Ploughing.—A Midwinter Episode.—Count Schlieffen and his Party.—The Sultân's Firmân.—Bedawîn Toll.—Natives and Native Houses.—"Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter."—Abîl el Kamh, Abel of Beth-maachah.—A Man of Belial—A Mother in Israel.—A Wise Woman.—Joab.—Biblical History of Abel.—Abîl, the Modern Village.—The Maachathites and the Geshurites.—Hunîn.—Beth-rehob.—The Castle of Hunîn Described by Lieutenant Kitchner.—Summer Crops.—Early and Latter Rain.—"In the morning sow thy seed."—"The Ploughman shall Overtake the Reaper."—Reaping and Threshing.—The Hills of Naphtali.—View over the Hûleh.—The Basin of the Jordan.—Ard el Hûleh, Merom.—Battle-fields of the Bible.—The Father of the Faithful.—Slaughter of Chedorlaomer.—The Confederate Kings Routed by Joshua.—Capture of Laish by the Danites.—Dan to Beersheba.—The Golden Calf of Dan.—The Metâwileh.—Balak and Baalam.—Involuntary Entertainment by the Beg at Tibnîn.—Kŭl'at Dubbah Described by Lieutenant Kitchner.—Wady Hûleh.—The Seigniorât.—Meis el Jebel.—Village Pools.—The Plain of Zaanaim.—Heber the Kenite.—Jael and Sisera.—The Oak and the Terebinth.—The Pistachio-nut-tree.—Kedes, Kedesh Naphtali.—Biblical History of Kedesh.—Cydessa.—Tombs of Barak, Deborah, and Jael.—Ruins at Kedes Described by Lieutenant Kitchner.—Wady el Mu'addamîyeh.—"Fly as doves to their windows."—Biblical Allusions to Doves.—'Alma.—Native Tradition.—Wady Leimôn.—Treasure-trove.—Castle of Safed.—"A City set on a Hill."—View from the Castle.—Safed a Holy City of the Jews.—Caverns in the Cliffs.—The Leimôny an Intermittent Stream.—The Jews of Safed.—Pharisaic Regulations regarding the Sabbath.—"The Sabbath for Man, not Man for the Sabbath."

May 23d.

WE follow a route to-day, on our way to Safed, abounding in scenery of great variety, and, in some places, of surprising magnificence; and our early start will give us time to enjoy them.

The khân near which we passed the night appears to have been large and substantial, although it is now very dilapidated.

Caravansaries like this were once fortified, and afforded shelter to pilgrims and merchants along the highways of travel and traffic all over the East, but they are now almost entirely deserted, a clear indication of two important changes in the country—that the public thoroughfares are less infested with robbers than formerly, and that trade has been diverted into other and more convenient channels. Ere another generation passes away these khâns will have disappeared, and no one who knows the cause of their decay will look with regret upon their ruins.

Originally devised for the protection of the traveller and the merchant, they early became the dread of both. By gaining possession of these prison-like structures the local chiefs commanded the road, and levied black-mail upon all who were so unfortunate as to be compelled to resort to them. They were all built after the same general model; this one was about three hundred feet square, with vaulted rooms on the four sides for guests, storage, and stables. The interior space, or quadrangle, was an uncovered court, with a fountain in the centre, where the animals were tethered and fed when the weather was not inclement. There were two entrances, one on the east, the other on the west side, and over the eastern gate was a mosk and minaret, but these have been demolished. There was a fine display of Saracenic architecture about the mosk and gate-way; and long Arabic inscriptions, in a style of calligraphy so intricate that even the most expert could not decipher it.

Khân Hâsbeiya is now chiefly celebrated for a fair, which is held once a week on the hill-side above it. The ordinary name, Sûk el Khân, market or bazar of the khân, given to the fair, is derived from these gatherings about it.

Are these fairs still popular and extensively patronized by the people of the country?

You would think so if you had an opportunity to attend one of them. Cotton is brought in bales from Nâblus; barley, and wheat, and sesame, and Indian-corn from the Hûleh, the Haurân, and Esdraelon. From Gilead and Bashan, and the surrounding districts, come horses and donkeys, cattle and flocks, with cheese, leben, curdled milk, semen, butter, honey, and similar articles. Then there are chickens and eggs, figs, raisins, apples, melons, grapes, and all kinds of fruits and vegetables in their season. The peddlers open their packages of trinkets; the jeweller is there with his tempting fabrics; the tailor with his ready-made garments; the shoemaker with his stock, from rough, hairy shoes to yellow and red morocco boots; the farrier is there with his tools; nails, and flat horseshoes, and drives a prosperous business; and so does the saddler, with his coarse sacks and his gayly-trimmed cloths. And thus it is with all the arts and occupations known to this people.

The tumult is incessant, and at a distance sounds like the "noise of many waters." Every man is crying his wares at the top of his voice, women disputing in shrill tones, children screaming; chickens crow, cackle, and squall; horses neighing, mules kicking, donkeys bray and fight, and the dogs bark. Every living thing adds to the many-toned and prodigious uproar. It is a miscellaneous comedy in full operation, where every actor does his best, and is supremely gratified with his own performance.

The people find many reasons for sustaining these gatherings. Every man, woman, and child has inherited the desire for trading, and, of course, all classes meet at this impromptu exchange to talk over the state of the markets, from the price of cucumbers to that of cotton, or of a thousand dollar horse from the Haurân. Every Arab is a politician, and groups gather around the outskirts of the crowd to discuss the doings of the "allied powers," the last firmân from the Sultân, or the new tax demanded by their own petty emîr. Descending to more ordinary matters, these fairs are great places for gossip and scandal. Friend meets friend and exchange the news of the day, of births, weddings, and deaths, and all the many incidents and accidents between those extremes of life. These fairs supply the place of many of the appliances of more civilized society. They are the daily newspaper, for there is one for every day within a circuit of forty miles. They are the exchange, the political caucus, the family gathering, the grand gala-day, and underlying the whole is the ever-present aim of making money.

On one of the lower terraces of those chalky white cliffs which form the southern end of the ridge of ed Dahar, north of the village of Kaukaba, are situated the bitumen wells so famous in this region. The rock is a soft, cretaceous marl, easily excavated; and there are about twenty-five wells, some of them fifty feet deep. The shaft actually worked when I was last there was one hundred and sixteen feet deep. The thickness of the bitumen stratum varies. In some wells it is fifteen feet, and in others it is not five. So, also, the quality varies. In some places it is extremely pure and jet-black; in others, only a few feet distant, it is unctuous, earthy, and of the color of iron-rust. The people who work the shaft believe that new bitumen is constantly forming; and the fact that the entire area through which those wells are and have been sunk for ages does not exceed an acre in extent strongly confirms the theory. The whole space must have been dug over many times, and yet the bitumen is found as abundant as ever. It is probable, therefore, that this mineral exists in large quantities in the marly mountain north of the wells, and that it exudes into this peculiar receptacle, and there hardens into bitumen.

The Arabs on the shore of the Dead Sea have a similar theory to account for the appearance of bitumen there. They say that it forms on the rock in the depths of the sea, and by earthquakes or other submarine concussions is broken off in large masses and rises to the surface. A few miles north of these wells a new shaft has been opened, not far from a village called Yŭhmur. The shaft is sunk through hard rock, and the bitumen is found at different depths. There it actually exudes into the shaft from crevices in the rock strata.

Under the names of pitch and slime, bitumen, in its various stages, is mentioned in the Bible. Probably Noah pitched the ark within and without with a preparation of bitumen, although the Hebrew word in Genesis vi. 14 is not the ordinary Shemitic name for it. In the Septuagint, however, it is translated asphaltum. After the Deluge the descendants of Noah were acquainted with bitumen, and used it to bind together the bricks in building the Tower of Babel.[1] The use of it as mortar is seen in some of the ruins of old Babylon. More than three hundred years later, "the kings of Sodom," fleeing before Chedorlaomer, fell into the slime-pits in the vale of Siddim.[1] The Hebrew words there used are the same that the Arabs now employ for those wells—Biâret Hŭmmar. It was probably an important article of merchandise, even at that early day, with Egypt, for the Egyptians employed it in embalming their dead. The mother of Moses also "daubed" her ark of bulrushes with slime and with pitch, but in reality she used bitumen and tar.[2] This is doubly interesting, as it reveals the process by which they prepared the bitumen.

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[1] Gen. xi. 3.

That mineral, as found in this country, melts readily enough by itself; but then, when cold, it is as brittle as glass. It must be mixed with tar while melting, and in that way it forms a hard substance, perfectly impervious to water. I once covered the roof of a room that leaked like a sieve with such a preparation, spreading it on while the rain descended in torrents, and yet with perfect success. The ark of bulrushes for the infant Moses, when thoroughly "daubed" with bitumen, would be well adapted to the object for which it was made. Our translation of this passage is deficient in clearness. The bulrush, gôme, is the Egyptian papyrus. Taboth, rendered ark, is the Arabic word for coffin. Slime and pitch are bitumen and tar. The ark may have been made like a coffin, to deceive the watchful officers of the government. That, too, would appeal more tenderly to the daughter of Pharaoh, and there is a typical signification in it. The saviour of Israel was laid in a coffin, and taken from a watery grave. The Saviour of the world rose from a rock-sepulchre in Jerusalem.

What is the name of this pretty plain that begins to open up to the south of our road?

It is generally admitted that the city of Ijon was situated at the upper end of the plain, and that its name has been perpetuated in the Arabic, 'Ayûn. Merj 'Ayûn, as it is now called, the meadow of fountains, well deserves that name, for it abounds in noble fountains. We shall have it almost constantly in view during our morning's ride. Many years ago, when I was in Hâsbeiya, that plain was visited by a most extraordinary storm.

It was on the 28th of December, when some people from Hâs-

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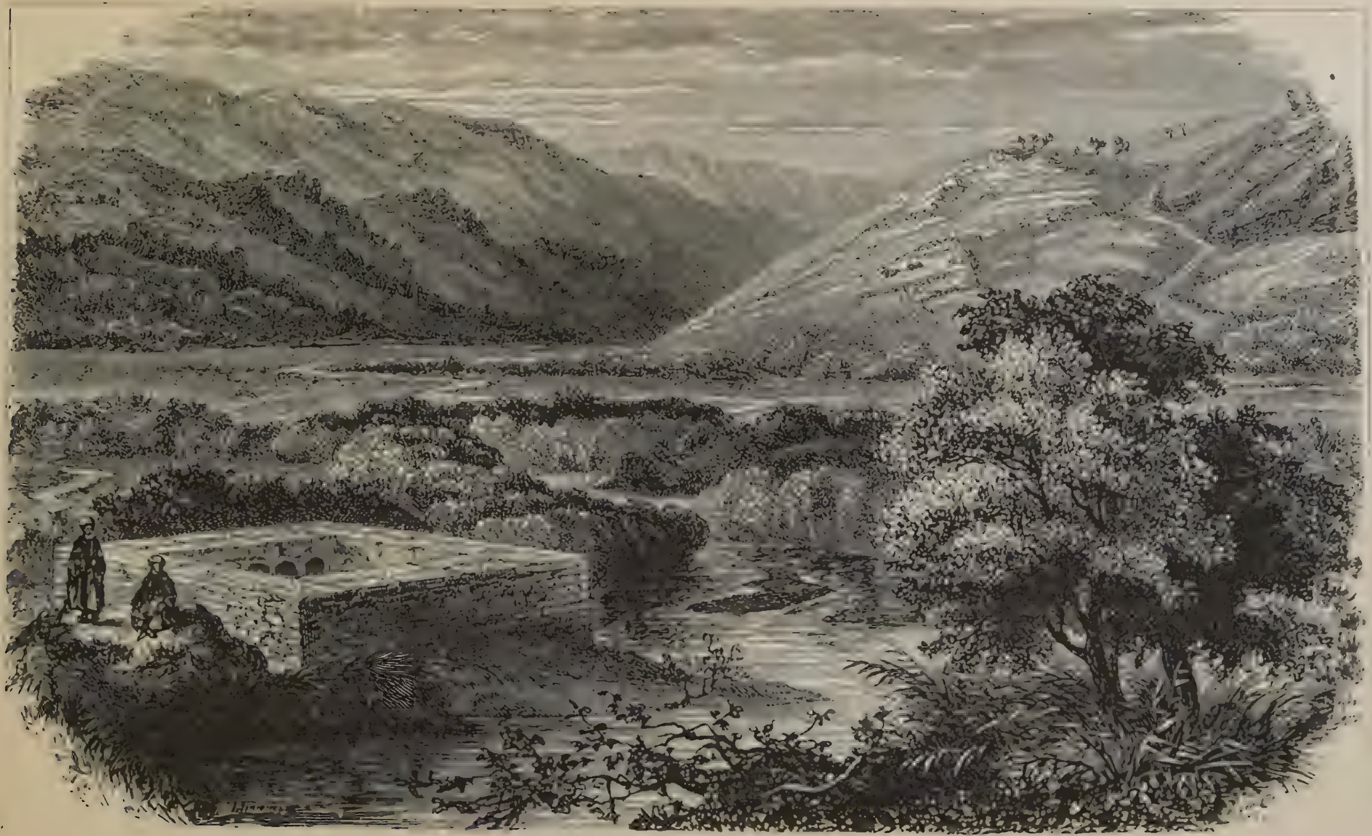
[1] Gen. xiv. 10.

[2] Exod. ii. 3.



EL HASBÂNY—THE JORDAN.

beiya were coming down the hill by Kefr Kîly, that village on the mountains west of the plain. One of them called the attention of the rest to tall columns of mist passing over the marsh of the Hûleh. They advanced northward very rapidly, and soon broke upon that little company with awful fury. Those of the party who were from Hâsbeiya were driven before the blast to Khureibeh, that little hamlet to the south-west of us, and escaped to it with difficulty. Those who attempted to reach Khiyam, on the east side of the plain, perished, although there Merj 'Ayûn is not more than two miles wide. Thus ten men died in a few minutes from the mere chill of that wonderful wind. A travelling merchant from Hâsbeiya sold the shrouds for the victims from Khiyam, and saw nine of them buried the next morning; and having examined into the nature of the catastrophe in the region where it occurred, I know it to be true. There was no snow, and not much rain, but the wind was perfectly terrible, upheaving and driving everything before it. Not only were those men chilled to death, but eighty-five head of cattle also perished before they could be brought to the village of Khiyam from the neighboring hills.

The inhabitants of this region have no tradition even of a similar catastrophe. People often perish in snow-storms on the mountains and in the desert of the Haurân, but it was never known before that a mere wind, and that down on this low plain, could chill people to death. The storm dispersed in various directions. It did much mischief on the hills of Naphtali, and over yonder on the Jaulân several people perished in consequence of its severity. I have often felt the extreme power of cold wind to reduce the vital heat of the body, but have never encountered anything like that icy blast. It reminds us of David's dreadful tempests, "hail, snow, and vapour, and stormy wind."[1]

That wind-storm on Merj 'Ayûn appeared to me almost incredible at the time, but afterwards, when in an open boat on the canal, and crossing the desert of Suez, from Zagazig to Lake Timsâh, we encountered a furious wind, which in a short time killed thousands of fish that were in the canal. We could see them floating on the water, and the shores of a large pond were literally covered with them. They had been killed by the cold wind, and we ourselves suffered severely; nor was it possible to keep warm. Mr. St. John describes a similar destruction of fish, though on a much larger scale, which he witnessed on a lake west of the Nile.

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[1] Psa. cxlviii. 8.

Merj 'Ayûn seems to be a very fertile plain, and, when clothed with golden harvest, it must present a beautiful appearance.

It does all that; nor is the country between it and the Hûleh devoid of interest. The little river which flows from the fountain of Derdârah, in the centre of the plain, issues at the south end, and near the village of Mutŭlleh leaps down a succession of romantic cascades in its haste to join the Ruahîneh. Passing west of Âbil el Kamh, it meets that stream coming from the large fountain of the same name that bursts out from under the cliff of the mountain; and the two united descend to the marsh of the Hûleh, where they ultimately join the Hasbâny.

That high mound south of us is called Tell Dibbîn, from the village north-west of us, and sometimes Tell Nâma. It is believed to be the site of the city of Ijon. The top of the mound shows traces of having once been occupied by an ancient town. Ijon belonged to Naphtali, and was the most northern city in this region. The only Biblical notices of it refer to its capture by Ben-hadad, King of Syria, about the year nine hundred and fifty before Christ, and again by Tiglath-pileser, some two hundred years later.[1] That invasion by the King of Assyria must have been a terrible calamity, for he "took Ijon, and Abel-beth-maachah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria," depopulating that entire region.

We will now turn westward, and, passing the village of Dibbîn, go on to Belât, north of it, to obtain a view of the profound gorge of the Lîtâny below that place.

I have made several excursions to different parts of its tremendous chasms. The most distant permanent source of the Lîtâny is the copious fountain of 'Ain es Sultân, at Ba'albek. But the water from that fountain is entirely used up during the season of irrigation, and not a drop of it reaches the sea. Other fountains, however, rise out of the centre of the plain, and being joined, first by the brook from Zahleh, and farther on by the much larger one from 'Ainjar, 'Ain el Jŭrr, the united river meanders through the lower Bŭkâ'a in a south-western direction some fifteen miles to Jubb Jenîn. Below that it flows in a constantly narrowing vale for six or seven miles to Jisr el Kŭr'aone. South of that bridge its volume is increased by the stream from the fountains of Meshghûrah.

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[1] 1 Kings xv. 20; 2 Kings xv. 29.

Thence onward the Lîtâny is engaged in a furious struggle with Lebanon for a passage to the sea. It has cut for itself a narrow gorge in the solid strata of the rock, so deep that no one at a little distance aside from it would suspect that a powerful river rushed between him and the opposite rocks. Yet there it is at the bottom of the chasm, all in a foam, leaping, darting, roaring along. Now it whirls round the jutting base of some mighty cliff so suddenly and so sharply that you are sure it bursts from the rock itself. Below, it runs madly against another towering cliff, from which you see no escape; but it does, and, darting along the base, it launches its whole force against a similar barrier. Recoiling, it then shoots like an arrow down some secret pathway, quite hidden by overhanging rocks and interlacing sycamores.

After about ten miles of this hard struggle it comes forth from the dark mouth of the mountain at the Kŭweh a clear and placid stream. Not long to rest, however, for immediately afterwards it springs madly down amongst large bowlders, reduced in width to half a dozen feet, but of depth unknown. Some six or eight miles farther south the road from Jezzîn to Hâsbeiya crosses Jisr Bŭrghŭz, and there the traveller has a fair view of the character of the river and its chasm. It appears like a small mountain torrent, foaming, roaring, and tumbling along amongst the rocks below. I have repeatedly visited the Kŭweh, or natural bridge, and once with Dr. Robinson. I have also crossed the river on it when returning from Hâsbeiya; but the road is so execrably bad, both on this side of the Lîtâny and between it and Nîha, on Lebanon, that nothing but dire necessity would lead one to select it a second time.

The best way to reach the Kŭweh is to ascend the ridge of ed Dahar, west of Hâsbeiya, to Yŭhmur, a village situated on the top of that ridge. From a cliff a little north of the village the stupendous chasm of the Lîtâny yawns beneath you, a thousand feet down and more. That is perhaps the wildest, grandest one-view that even the Lîtâny presents. The descent from Yŭhmur to the Kŭweh takes about half an hour, and the path, in some places, winds along the very edge of the precipice, where I always prefer to dismount and walk. The bridge may have been formed by the falling of large masses of rock from the overhanging cliffs on the western side into the stream below. They are of stupendous height, perpendicular in some places, and abound in suspicious-looking caverns.

Access to them is extremely difficult, and in times long since passed away they may have been occupied by Lebanon's Troglodytes. Some of them are even now frequented in the summer season by shepherds with their flocks of long-eared goats. I once climbed, with no little risk, into one of those caves, which had been considerably enlarged, and formed into a stronghold by those who, in those evil days, levied black-mail on travellers. They had some way to introduce cattle, and even horses, into those now inaccessible chambers, as appears from mangers cut in the rock, and other stable accommodation. How they accomplished that it is impossible to know, since the face of the cliff actually overhangs the boiling abyss of the river, two hundred feet below. One wants the strong pinions of the royal eagles, that sail so majestically overhead, to reach those caves.

The appearance of the bridge itself is not very striking, partly because it is concealed by trees and bushes, and in part because the river channel at that point is very narrow. The entire breadth of the rocky mass covering the river is sixty-eight feet, but the road on the top of it is not more than ten feet wide. The height above the water, on the lower side, is one hundred and five feet, and the thickness of the arch is ninety feet. The rock about the bridge is a crystalline marble, but too imperfect to be available for building purposes. The best view is obtained from a projecting rock on the east side of the chasm, though it is impossible to get down from it to the river; but on the west side, by creeping cautiously from ledge to ledge, you can let yourself down, not without some danger, and more toil, quite to the surface of the tumultuous stream. There you are completely shut in by lofty, picturesque cliffs, which

THE LÎTÂNY ABOVE THE NATURAL BRIDGE.

rise several hundred feet above your head, while the noise of the rushing, raging Lîtâny is almost deafening. In some places the entire river forces its way between opposing rocks only a few feet apart, tempting one to leap the mad rapids to the other side. A large sycamore stretches one of its gigantic arms quite across the seething waters, offering a perilous passage to those whose heads are steady enough to accomplish the feat.

THE LÎTÂNY BELOW THE NATURAL BRIDGE.

The banks of the river, and the cliffs above it, are covered with oleander bushes, and studded with bay, oak, fig, olive, and other trees, over which wild vines trail their leafy tendrils, and gay flowers peep out from every fissure and sunny nook in that tremendous gorge. Both above and below the bridge the opposing cliffs are so high and steep, and the intervening chasm winds so sharply and suddenly, that it is impossible to trace the course of the stream for any considerable distance, and the river seems at times to gush out from the very heart of the mountain. Through a perfect wilderness of mighty rocks it works its way down for miles, and I have spent many an hour climbing its giddy precipices, and looking into its frightful depths with a strange, irresistible fascination.

I shall long remember my visit to the Kŭweh with some German friends. It was one of midwinter's most glorious days, and long ere we reached Hâsbeiya the sun went down in all his glory, tinging the snow on Hermon with a pale pink blush, which deepened rapidly to a rich rosy red. How far below Nature's perfection in color is the highest style of human art!

In presence of such a picture the greatest masters that ever handled the brush could do nothing but admire, wonder, and despair. We had a fine moonlight ride down the valley of the Upper Jordan, and over the range of Hermon to Hâsbeiya. My companions were in high spirits, galloping hither and thither, to the great annoyance of the nestling lapwings that fled in terror through the darkness, uttering that singular note of theirs, from which they derive their name of bu-têet amongst the Arabs. Finally, they allowed their wearied horses to choose their own pathway in peace, while they sang the songs of their Fatherland to the echoing hills and listening stars. Thus passed away the last hours of the 15th of January, in the year 1851.

This is by far the most picturesque and romantic river scenery we have witnessed in the Holy Land.

The only place that can compare with this gorge of the Lîtâny at Belât is along the Upper Barada, the Pharpar of Damascus, but it is not so wild and grand as this. And now take your stand on some projecting rock, from which you can see to the bottom of this tremendous chasm. There is the river, more than eight hundred feet beneath you, tearing at the very roots of Lebanon, and rasping out a passage for itself with mighty din and desperate haste. I have sat for hours gazing into this chasm—have let myself down from crag to crag until I stood at the bottom—have rested midway up its cliffs upon some projecting shelf of rock, and watched the timid conies creep out and sun themselves, and the bold eagles coming and going to and from their eyries in the cliffs.

There are hundreds of them, and their manœuvres, particularly when returning to their nests, are very impressive. They sail round and round in ever-narrowing gyrations, and, when right over the chasm, poise themselves for a moment; then, like a bolt from the clear sky, they dart, head-foremost, down, down, with wings collapsed. Sinking far below their eyrie, they round-to in a grand parabola, and then, with two or three backward flaps of their huge pinions to check them, they land in safety in the midst of their clamorous brood, and divide amongst those gross and greedy eaglets the prey which they have brought from far. Come to Belât, vain man, and answer thy Maker. "Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high? She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place. From thence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off. Her young ones also suck up blood: and where the slain are, there is she."[1]

Moses, in that beautiful ode which he "spake in the ears of all the congregation of Israel," refers to the habits of the eagle in a way which I have never understood: "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him."[2] Do you suppose that the parent eagle literally beareth her young on her wings?

It is not necessary to press every poetical figure into strict prosaic accuracy. The belief, however, appears to have been prevalent amongst the ancients that the eagle did actually take up her timid young on outstretched wings and carry them forth, to embolden them and teach them how to use their own pinions. To this idea Moses doubtless refers in Exodus xix. 4: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself." I have seen the old eagle fly round and round the nest, and past it, back and forth, while the young ones fluttered and shivered on the edge, as if eager but afraid to launch forth from the giddy precipice. And no wonder, for the nest "is on high," and a fall from thence would end their flight forever.

Moses and Job seem both to have been familiar with this bird and its habits. One allusion of Job is very striking—"Her eyes behold afar off."[3] The power of vision in the eagle is amazing, almost incredible. No sooner does a kid fall in the wilderness amongst the bushes, than some of those keen-sighted hunters after

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[1] Job xxxix. 27–30.

[2] Deut. xxxii. 11, 12.

[3] Job xxxix. 29.

THE LÎTÂNY BELOW THE KHŬTWEH.

their prey notice it from their pathway in mid-heaven, and, circling round and round, they pounce down upon it and bear it away to their nests. This appears to be done purely by sight.

To what physical change in the life of the eagle does the Psalmist refer in the promise to the righteous that they shall renew their youth like the eagle's?[1]

Perhaps merely to his coming forth in a fresh costume, and in youthful beauty, after the moulting season; or more likely it may refer to the fact that this royal bird is long-lived, and retains its vigor to extreme old age.

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[1] Psa. ciii. 5.

But we have not yet finished with the river Lîtâny. Turning westward, below Belât, almost at a right angle, it has cut a channel across the southern end of Lebanon, at a place called the Khŭtweh, some two hundred feet long, and so very narrow that I have sat on the west side and laid my hand on the opposite precipice, which rises at least one hundred feet perpendicularly above the water. The river there darts, swift as an arrow, through this flume, and, like the shuddering visitor, seems to hold its breath in terror. From there onwards for a few miles the scenery is less wild, until it turns south and flows under the castle of esh Shŭkîf, and then runs westward towards the sea. That last descent of eighteen or twenty miles abounds in noble scenery, the profound gorges echoing the rush and roar of the mighty waters.

The Lîtâny is the ancient Leontes, and it is by far the largest river that empties into the Mediterranean in this country, except the Orontes. Both rise in the great plain of Cœle-syria, and close together. The Orontes flows north, the latter south and southwest, and drains the entire Bŭkâ'a, as Cœle-syria is now called. The whole length of the Lîtâny, with its countless doublings, cannot be less than one hundred and twenty miles, and in that distance it descends fully four thousand feet. European engineers have entertained the idea of carrying a railway up the Lîtâny to the Bŭkâ'a, from whence it could easily pass to Hamah, Aleppo, and the Euphrates, and also to Damascus, Palmyra, and Bagdad; but no one will dream of such an enterprise who has explored the long, wild gorge through which it flows to the sea, and found out what that really is.

This river is not mentioned in the Bible. It seems to have formed the northern boundary of the territory actually occupied by the children of Israel, for I cannot find a single city on that side of it that was inhabited by either Naphtali or Asher, though David and Solomon undoubtedly held a temporary sway over some places farther north than even Sidon. Josepnus seems to imply that Arca, beyond Tripoli, was subject to Asher; but the identity of the place referred to with the home of the Arkites may well be doubted. Nor does the fact that the border of Asher reached to Zidon prove that the line of actual possession crossed the Lîtâny, for no doubt Zidon extended her rule down to it, and thus the border would reach that of Asher, on the banks of this river.

We will now resume our ride southward along the ridge that separates Merj 'Ayûn from the chasm of the Lîtâny.

PROTESTANT CHURCH AT EL KHIYAM.

The country in all directions appears to be carefully cultivated, and abounds in well-built villages. I notice a building located on the eastern ridge overlooking the plain of Merj 'Ayûn, which has quite a modern appearance, and different from any we have seen in Palestine.

It is the church belonging to the Protestants of el Khiyam. They were assisted in the erection of it by Mr. Henderson, of Park, a gentleman who will long be remembered for his liberal contributions to such objects of benevolence. The lower ranges of Hermon are seen to the east of the church. Khiyam is a prosperous village on the ridge separating Merj 'Ayûn from the valley of the Hasbâny. On the same ridge, two miles farther north, is Ibl el Hawa, where there is another Protestant church. In fact, the plain of the Biblical Ijon is surrounded with villages, in most of which there is a Protestant community. The largest and most flourishing of them is in Judeideh, which we have already passed on our left. Here, on the right, seated on the brink of the chasm of the Lîtâny, opposite Kŭl'at esh Shŭkîf, is Dier Mîmâs, a large and beautiful village, commanding a fine view up the river gorge, and looking down westward towards the sea.

I have spent many memorable days and nights in this region; and my object in choosing this route along the top of the ridge is to give you a near view of the ruined castle of Shŭkîf, which crowns the stupendous cliff on the west side of the river. Look, now, across the profound gorge of the Lîtâny, and you can see that fine old fortress standing on the very edge of the chasm. The view from there is magnificent, and the precipice, fifteen hundred feet down to the river beneath, is frightful. I have often visited it, and have spent several nights, at different times, encamped in its ample fosse. When there I have rolled stones from the castle, and watched their gigantic leaps from point to point, until they were lost in the bushes or the river at the bottom. "Men are but boys of larger growth," and will be to the end of time.

Homer must have witnessed the same thing in his day before he was blind, or he could not have written—

> From steep to steep the rattling ruin bounds,
> At every shock the crackling wood resounds;
> Still gathering force, it smokes, and, urged amain,
> Whirls, leaps, and thunders down impetuous to the plain.

That castle is the most conspicuous object in this region. The Crusaders had possession of it for some time, and called it Belfort, but I cannot believe that it was originally constructed by them. A position so strong in itself, and commanding the great highway from Sidon and the sea-coast over into the Jordan valley, and the country east of it, must have been occupied by a fortress from those early times when Laish, which is Dan, belonged to the

Zidonians. The probability is that the Crusaders, as in many other cases, made use of the materials of a more ancient castle in building or repairing the one which we now see. Certain portions of it bear unmistakable evidence of having been erected by Christian architects, and there is no reason to doubt that the ruined chapel, on the highest part of the castle, was built by the Crusaders.

The walls of the castle are very lofty, being in some parts nearly eighty feet high above the fosse, which protects the south end and west side, where alone such defence was needed. The fosse was wide and deep, and beneath it were immense cisterns, some of which are still used by the inhabitants of the adjacent village of 'Arnûn. The interior of the castle is now a bewildering labyrinth of vaults, halls, blind passages, subterranean cisterns, extensive magazines, and stables. The entire length of the castle, from north to south, is about eight hundred feet, and the width, including the vaults on the declivity along the eastern side overhanging the gorge, is about three hundred feet in the widest part. The northern end is quite narrow, the shape and the size of the entire castle being necessarily conformed to that of the ridge on which it was built. The only entrance was near the south-east angle, across a moat, on the very edge of the profound chasm, which falls away, sheer down, fifteen hundred feet to the river.

All visitors mention the vast and magnificent panorama which the castle commands in every direction. But its day is over, its glory departed, and it now stands an impressive monument of the olden time, when every village was protected, or oppressed, as the case might be, by those who held such formidable fortifications. They are no longer needed, and everywhere are fast crumbling back to dust. Kŭl'at esh Shŭkîf has often been besieged and captured; the last time by Jezzâr Pasha, of Acre, who quite dismantled it, in the early part of the present century; nor has it been repaired or occupied since that final overthrow. The mother of my guide to it, on one occasion, informed me that she, then a mere child, was in the castle when "el Jezzâr," the butcher, captured it.

How beautifully clear and transparent the atmosphere is this morning! Hermon appears surprisingly near, and we can almost see the very stones in the wall of the castle above Bâniâs.

The weather is, indeed, all that could be desired for our ride over the oak-clad mountains of Naphtali, and the air is quite warm for this season of the year. It is not always so, however, and some of my experience in this region has been far from agreeable.

KŬL'AT ESH SHŬKÎF—CASTLE OF BELFORT.

I was once here with the Countess of Schlieffen and her son, when the ground was frozen hard, and flying clouds pelted us with sleet and snow. Eighteen hundred and forty-nine had been swept away by a wild winter storm, and the new year came in clear and cold. Our German friends, who had been detained in Hâsbeiya for a month by sickness, had left us a few days before, carrying the servant-maid on an extemporized litter. As it began to rain violently soon after they started, we were quite anxious about them, and our solicitude was not relieved by the contradictory accounts brought to us by the peasants. Early one morning I set off in search of them. The Hasbâny was not fordable, and I rode to the bridge, where I had an opportunity to see the Upper Jordan rushing full and headlong over its rocky bed.

The country was flooded, and yet the farmers were out ploughing and sowing on the mountain declivities. The pointed share of the native plough will pass through mud without difficulty or encumbrance, and for such soil it is just the kind required. Moreover, the puny teams could manage no other. I saw a man ploughing with two donkeys, very small and poor. They looked dejected, as though the yoke was degrading to their sensibilities.

In three hours I reached Kŭlâ'at, the village we have just passed. There I found the countess and her party in dire confusion. Their story, after leaving Hâsbeiya, was this: the men hired to carry the sick maid set down the litter in the mud and ran away. The rain fell in torrents, and the count was obliged to summon, in the name of the Government, the population of Kŭlâ'at to their assistance. They finally reached that village about dark. There they had been detained ever since by the storm, and in quarters as filthy and uncomfortable as only this country can furnish. Not being able to procure carriers, the dragoman had left, two days before, for Safed, to hire porters from that place. That morning, however, twelve men had offered to take the maid to Hûnîn for three hundred piastres, and the count had set off with them, leaving his mother and the chaplain to come on as best they could.

It was then after twelve o'clock, and but little progress had been made in preparation. They were surrounded by a rude, screaming, and quarrelling mob, and the countess begged me to come to her assistance, as she could not talk a word with the people, nor comprehend the cause of the noise and delay. After an amount of reasoning and rebuke, the refractory muleteers loaded their animals, and we set off—a party of about forty, with horses, mules, and donkeys so lank and filthy that it was not easy to decide to what particular genus they belonged. Our course was in a general direction southward, along the ridge that divides the river Lîtâny from Merj 'Ayûn.

Passing between Deir Mîmâs and Kefr Kîly on the west, and that large Druse village, el Mutŭlleh, on the east, we came at the end of two hours to Neb'a Nîha, which we have now left behind us. There we stopped to rest, and to gather the scattered members of our party. From there we toiled up to Hûnîn along the path which we are now about to take. Just before reaching the castle of Hûnîn we overtook Count William and his party with the sick maid, who had been all day in making a distance of nine miles. Hûnîn is inhabited by Metâwileh, an inhospitable and insolent set. But the firmân of the Sultân, with which the count was provided, and the stringent orders of the pasha, were not to be resisted. The sheikh gave up his own room to the countess and her sick maid, while a poor widow vacated her habitation—about twelve feet square—for the gentlemen. The loads began to come in, and by dark all had arrived except the cook and his company.

Having waited until after nightfall for the missing cook and his party, we roused the whole village to go in search of them. They were soon found and brought in safely. Both they and the chaplain had been stopped by Arabs, and compelled to pay Bedawîn toll before they were allowed to pass. It was then very cold and dark. The wind howled over the mountain, and the clouds pelted us with rain and snow whenever we ventured out of our retreat. With great noise and confusion we got the baggage stowed in the room of the countess, and the forty animals crowded into a large vault of the old castle, and fed, amidst uproar, kicking, and fighting, in total darkness. By ten o'clock the cook had prepared some kind of dinner, and we spent an hour in talking over the adventures of the day and night. Then we lay down in our clothes and muddy boots, cold and wet, and tried to sleep; but, with dogs barking outside, cocks crowing overhead, fleas tickling, and other joint occupants of our twelve-foot room crawling over us, our sleep was none of the soundest nor the most refreshing.

However, morning came at last. Our friends set off for Safed, and I returned to Hâsbeiya. It is not easy to exaggerate the hardships and even dangers which travellers sometimes encounter in the winter season. Tents cannot be used, and such parties are therefore at the mercy of the rude and mercenary peasants. The amount of money which the countess spent could not have been less than fifty dollars a day, and yet the discomforts of her situation were enough to drive any one to despair. The houses are not fit to put pigs in, and every door-yard is full of mire and filth. Through that one must flounder, and into it the baggage will be tumbled. To add to the perplexity and distress, the villagers, of every age and sex, throng around like bees, and laugh instead of rendering any assistance. Dogs bark, donkeys bray, mules and horses kick and break bounds, servants are chaffering, and buying all kinds of eatables, and at exorbitant prices; the poor are begging, and all are demanding bakhshîsh for contributing their share to the intolerable annoyance. The count and his large party went through all that, and the marvel was that the sick maid survived it, recovered, and returned to Germany. The countess remarked that she needed no other illustration of the admonition, "Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter."[1]

We have now reached a stand-point in our ascent to Hûnîn which commands a vast outlook over the country to the east and south; but the only place to which I would direct your particular attention is Âbil el Kamh, in the valley south of Merj 'Ayûn, the Biblical plain of Ijon. I suppose Âbil occupies the site of Abel of Beth-maachah, mentioned in the twentieth chapter of 2 Samuel. Its claim to notoriety is contained in the following narrative:

"A man of Belial, whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite, blew a trumpet, and said, We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel."[2] David was extremely disturbed at this rebellion of the son of Bichri, and Joab, the mighty captain, went in pursuit of him through all the tribes of Israel; and he "came and besieged him in Abel of Beth-maachah." There is its modern representative on that long oval tell to the east of us. I have often ridden round it, and from its summit tried to realize the scene.

Taking advantage of an oblong knoll of natural rock that rises

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[1] Matt. xxiv. 20.

[2] 2 Sam. xx. 1.

ÂBIL EL KAMH—ABEL-BETH-MAACHAH.

above the surrounding plain, the original inhabitants raised a high mound sufficiently large for their city. With a deep "trench" and strong wall, it must have been almost impregnable. The country on every side is well watered, and very fertile. The Derdârah, from Merj 'Ayûn, glides swiftly along the western declivity of the tell, and from the neighboring mountain gushes out the powerful stream of er Ruahîneh. Such rivulets would convert any part of this country, under skilful cultivation, into a paradise of fruits and flowers, and such, no doubt, was Abel when she was called "a mother in Israel." But the iron hoof of war tramples all in the dust.

The besiegers "cast up a bank against the city, and it stood in the trench: and all the people that were with Joab battered the wall, to throw it down. Then cried a wise woman out of the city, Hear, hear; say, I pray you, unto Joab, Come near hither, that I may speak with thee. And when he was come near unto her, the woman said, Art thou Joab? And he answered, I am he. Then she said unto him, Hear the words of thine handmaid. And he answered, I do hear. Then she spake, saying, They were wont to speak in old time, saying, They shall surely ask counsel at Abel: and so they ended the matter. I am one of them that are peaceable and faithful in Israel: thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel: why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the Lord?

"And Joab answered and said, Far be it, far be it from me, that I should swallow up or destroy. The matter is not so: but a man of mount Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, hath lifted up his hand against the king, even against David: deliver him only, and I will depart from the city. And the woman said unto Joab, Behold, his head shall be thrown to thee over the wall. Then the woman went unto all the people in her wisdom. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and cast it out to Joab. And he blew a trumpet, and they retired from the city, every man to his tent. And Joab returned to Jerusalem unto the king."[1]

Nearly a hundred years after, Abel was taken by the captains of Ben-hadad, King of Syria; and about two hundred years later, Tiglath-pileser carried the inhabitants away captive into Assyria.[2]

Âbil el Kamh is a sad example of the decay and ruin that has swallowed up "the inheritance of the Lord." The present village, far from being "a mother in Israel," occupies only a small portion of the tell, and wisdom and counsel will be sought in vain at the hands of the few peasants who lounge in rags and filth upon the dunghills which barricade the entrance to their houses.

Abel was "of Beth-maachah." Does that imply that the small kingdom of the Maachathites included both it and the region around the north end of the Hûleh?

It is quite impossible to ascertain the exact position of the territory of either Maachah or Geshur. Geshur was, perhaps, the region above and east of Jisr Benât Y'akôb. Dr. Robinson suggests "that the adjacent district on the east of the Jordan took the name of Geshur, as if 'Bridge-land,'" that being the Hebrew word for bridge.[3] It may have occupied a part of the district now known

[1] 2 Sam. xx. 15–22.

[2] 1 Kings xv. 20; 2 Kings xv. 29.

[3] Rob. Phys. Geo. p. 155.

as el Jaulân, extending from the north-east of Lake Tiberias to the southern foot-hills of Hermon.

The Maachathites, I suppose, possessed the country west of the Geshurites, around the southern base of Hermon, and they may have occupied a part of what is now called Ard el Hûleh, north of Tell el Kâdy. Abel would thus be on the border of their territory. Its name in 2 Chronicles xvi. 4 is Abel-maim, valley of waters, which is not inapplicable to the location of Âbil el Kamh. Nothing very honorable is recorded of the Maachathites. The men of Maacah fought against Joab together with the Ammonites, and they appear to have been the enemies of David.[1]

Our geographical investigations have led us up to Hûnîn, and here we will rest and lunch, after which we can examine the ruins of the ancient fortress, the Château Neuf of the Crusaders.

The remains of the castle and the old town are more extensive than I expected, and the view from some of the towers over the Hûleh and the eastern mountains is very grand. What place do you suppose it may have been in the olden time?

Dr. Robinson makes this the site of Beth-rehob; but Dan, which was at Tell el Kâdy, is said to have been "in the valley that lieth by Beth-rehob," and that more naturally points to Bâniâs. It is difficult to believe that either of the Rehobs given to Asher was at this place, for Hûnîn is in the territory of Naphtali. Dan, however, and the plain around it, including Bâniâs, seems to have belonged to Zidon, and that city, with its territory, was assigned to Asher. If Bâniâs, therefore, is Beth-rehob, it might have been given to Asher in the original distribution, but Zidon never really was in their possession; for we know from the first chapter of Judges and the thirty-first verse that they could not subdue it.

The castle of Hûnîn has a very imposing appearance from the plain below, owing to its position, and its eight or ten round towers which defended the southern wall. They are, however, comparatively modern, and are continually being demolished by the villagers, who use the stone in building their houses. The only ancient part is the north end, which is about three hundred feet square, and surrounded by a fosse cut in the solid rock, forty feet wide and twenty deep. The original wall was built of large bevelled stones, and bound together by iron clamps, as may be seen in a few places under the modern ruins.

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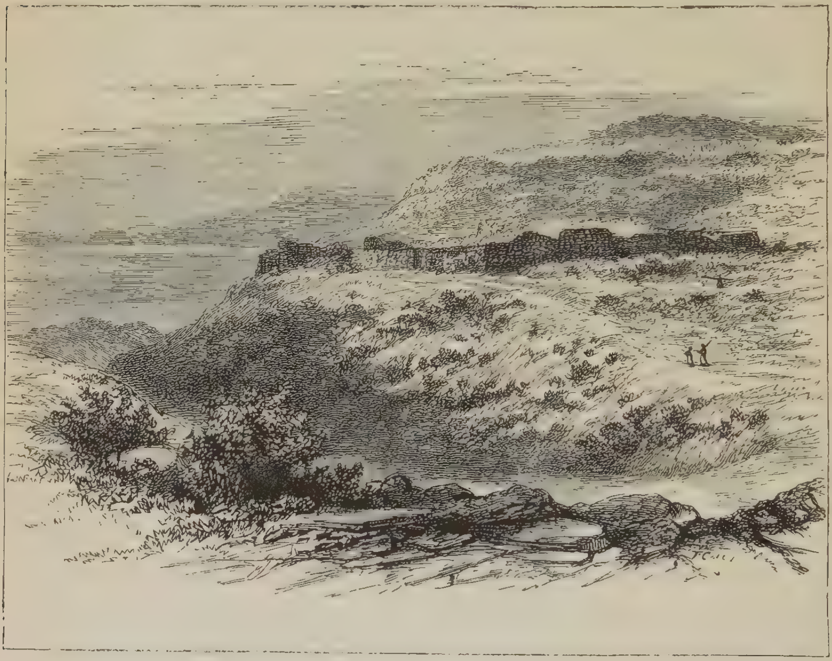
[1] 2 Sam. x. 6–14.

Lieutenant Kitchner and his exploring party visited this place, and he thus describes the castle:

"Hûnîn is another Crusading castle; it was on the ancient road from Tyre to Bâniâs, and must have been a place of considerable strength. It is situated on a slight elevation in a gap in the hills, where they fall steeply to the Hûleh valley [two thousand feet below]. Adjoining the castle on the east is the small village of Hûnîn. The castle measures seven hundred and forty feet east and west, by three hundred and forty feet north and south. On the west a rock-cut ditch, [twenty feet deep and] forty feet broad, surrounded a citadel two hundred and forty feet square, separating it from the remainder of the castle. There were two entrances, one



KŬL'AT HÛNÎN—CHÂTEAU NEUF.

by a causeway which led up to the castle on the south, similar to the one at Tibnîn, and the other was a gate-way in the eastern wall, which still remains, showing Crusading work. The whole of the interior is a mass of shapeless ruins [Roman, Saracen, Crusader, Turk, and Arab], and most of the Saracenic walls and buildings are also ruined. There was a mosque on the south side, but the roof has fallen in. The Crusading remains show similar work to that at Tibnîn in every respect, and there seems to be nothing which would lead to giving to this castle an earlier date than the former.

"In Ansel Jelîl, by el Kâdy Mujîr ed Dîn, a history of Jerusalem and Hebron, dated 900 A.H., it is said: After the battle of Hattîn [1187 A.D.], as Saladin went to Tyre, he detached a chief to invest the castle of Hûnîn; the garrison were reduced by famine and surrendered. Saladin gave the castle to one of his chiefs, Beder ed Dîn Wîdrâm el Bârizny."

We must now continue our ride, for Safed is several hours distant, and the road in some places is rough and difficult.

I notice that the farmers are busily at work ploughing and sowing in their fields. Will what is planted at this late season come to maturity before the burning heat of summer?

They are preparing to sow their seifiyât, or summer crops, and this is the proper time for that work. It is to be remembered, however, that the farmer's occupation in this country is liable to great variations as to times and seasons, being altogether dependent upon the rain-fall—"the early and the latter rain." The husbandman cannot plant until "the early rain" has softened the soil, and that is sometimes delayed till the end of December.

I have seen one winter when there was not enough rain to enable the farmers to sow their grain before the month of February, but then there followed an unusually wet and late spring. The mountains were covered, on the last day of March, with a heavy fall of fresh snow. The harvest also was late, but it was very abundant. If the latter rains had ceased early, no reaper would have filled his bosom with sheaves from his blasted fields. Thus the farmers must plough and sow in hope, aware of the uncertainty that attends their labors.

It was upon facts such as these that the wise man founded his admonition, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."[1] Of course, the idea is, sow early and sow late, as opportunity offers or circumstances require. And the wise farmer in this country must thus act; for no human sagacity, no length of experience, will enable him to determine, in any given year, that what is sown early will prosper best. If the spring be late and wet, the early grain grows too rank, lodges, and is blasted, while the late sown yields a large harvest. This farmer tells me, in answer to my question, that they will both be equally good this year, or, as he expresses it, the late will overtake the early. This may be so, but, as Solomon says, he does not know it.

These men seem about to realize the prophecy of Amos: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the ploughman shall overtake the reaper."[2] Reaping has already commenced in some parts of the country, and on the low lands generally.

Yes, in the valley of the Jordan, which is here just below us. This late ploughing and sowing suggested the terms of the prophecy, and gave an air of verisimilitude to it. So, also, the next clause in that thirteenth verse, "the treader of grapes shall overtake him that soweth seed," derives its significance from facts in agricultural experience. The time for the treading of grapes comes on during the dry months of autumn, and is ordinarily soon over; but this promise implies that the vintage will be prolonged into the rainy season, when alone the husbandman can begin to sow his seed. In the good days of promise, however, the vintage will be abundant and long, while the rains will be early and copious, and thus the treading of grapes will run on to the time when the fall crops are sown. This is never actually the case at present, yet, in seasons remarkably favorable, an approximation is seen sufficiently near to justify the allusion.

In Leviticus xxvi. 3, 5, there is a similar promise: "If ye walk in my statutes, the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time." But here the preceding parallelism is varied. Instead of "the ploughman shall overtake the reaper," it is "the vintage shall reach unto sowing time. The threshing comes between the reaping and the treading of grapes, and the promise, therefore, covers another portion of the farmer's year. Reaping is done in April, May, and June, and the vintage is in September and October. Hence the harvest, according to the promise, is to be so abundant that it will take several months to tread out the grain. And here, again, actual experience suggested the language of the prophecy. In very abundant seasons I have seen the threshing actually prolonged until October. Take the three promises together, and they spread over the entire year of the husbandman. The ploughman will continue his work until that which was first sown is ready for the sickle; the threshing follows the reaper, and extends to the vintage; and then the treading of grapes reaches to the time for sowing the next crop.

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[1] Eccl. xi. 6.

[2] Amos ix. 13.

Our pathway has become very rough and rocky, as you forewarned me at Hûnîn that it would be; but how beautiful are these hills of Naphtali, clothed with oak and terebinth trees!

This may be my twentieth visit, and yet they appear as pretty now as on the day when I first saw them. Such beauty never wearies the eye, but always rejoices the heart. Let us turn up to a small ruin on our left, called el Mŭnârâh. Step out now upon this rocky platform, and enjoy a panorama as beautiful if not so vast as that which Moses saw from the top of Pisgah.

Even in this land I have not seen a prospect to equal that.

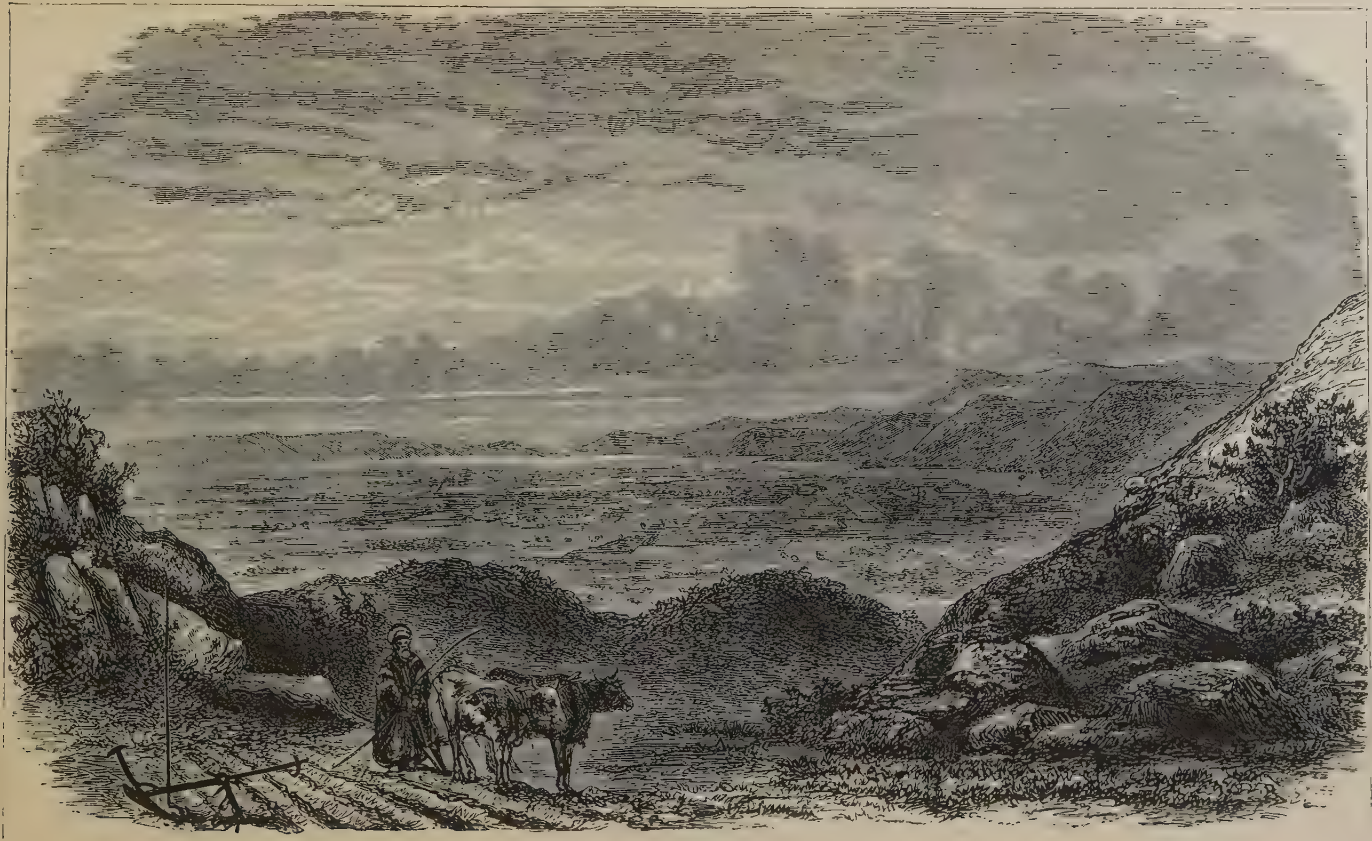
I presume not. The declivity sinks beneath our stand-point sheer down about two thousand feet to the plain of the Hûleh, and when you can withdraw your gaze from this scene turn to that which surrounds it. Lebanon stretches northward to the snowy summit of Sŭnnîn, which looks down upon Cœle-syria and the ruins of Ba'albek. Before us Hermon lifts his head to heaven in solemn and solitary majesty. Those cone-shaped hills on that vast plateau to the east and south-east are so many landmarks in the mysterious Haurân, with the great desert of Arabia beyond. The shadowy outlines that bound the horizon to the south mark the territories of Gilead and Bashan, the domains of Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites. On our right are the mountains of Galilee and Samaria, while behind us the hills of Naphtali and Asher sink down to the sea-coast of Acre, Tyre, and Sidon.

What countless thoughts such a group of names and places so famous in Biblical history suggests!

Not to confuse the mind with dim distances and immeasurable magnitudes, let us study awhile this noble vale beneath us. It is at once the source and the valley of the Jordan. During the rainy months of winter a hundred little tributaries from those snowy ravines around the north-western end of Hermon unite to swell the river which wears its way down through dark beds of lava, some twenty miles, to the fountain of el Fauwâr, below Hâsbeiya, which is its most distant *permanent* source. Under the name of el Hasbâny it passes southward to the plain and marsh of the Hûleh, receiving on its way the stream from Shib'a, the fountain of Seraiyib, beneath Kefr Shûba, and the Luweizâny at el Ghŭjar. Thus increased, it enters into the marsh about five miles, when it is joined by the Leddân, from Tell el Kâdy, and the Bâniâsy, from Bâniâs, united a short half-mile north of the tell called Sheikh Yûsuf. Besides these, a considerable stream comes from Merj 'Ayûn, the joint contribution of two fountains, the Derdârah, below Khiyam, and er Ruahîneh, west of Âbil el Kamh. Several large fountains also burst out along the base of this mountain on which we are standing, and send their streams through the marsh to the river and the lake. The largest are those of Belât and el Mellâhah.

The view includes almost the entire basin of the Hûleh, the Biblical Merom, and a large region north of it, called Ard el Hûleh. The hill-country to the south-east and east belonged, I suppose, to the Geshurites, and the small kingdom of the Maachathites occupied the northern part. You may associate this varied scene with some of the most memorable incidents in sacred history.

We have spread out before us one of the great battle-fields of the Bible—a vast theatre, upon whose spacious stage many a bloody tragedy has been enacted in dreadful earnest. In the opening scene the chief actor is no less a personage than the "Father of the Faithful," scattering before him those hard-named confederates who conquered Sodom, and carried away righteous Lot, with his family, captive. Abraham was sitting in his tent door, near the great oak of Mamre, when a fugitive from the vale of Siddim brought the tidings of his nephew's captivity. That was no time



ARD EL HÛLEH—THE PLAIN OF MEROM.

for rending of garments and fruitless lamentations. Arming his own servants—three hundred and eighteen—and sending a hasty summons to Mamre, and his brothers Eshcol and Aner, to join him, he set off in hot pursuit. Passing Bethlehem and Salem, he swept over the mountains and along the plains of Sychar and Esdraelon, and at the close of the fourth day—Josephus says he attacked them on the fifth night—he was upon the hills of Naphtali.

From these bold headlands he could see with perfect distinctness the enemy carousing in careless security around the fountain of el Leddân. Having made the necessary disposition for the attack, he waited for the veil of darkness; then, like an avalanche from the mountains, he rushes down upon the sleeping host. The panic is immediate and universal, the confusion inextricable, the rout wild and ruinous. After pursuing the fleeing host to "Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus," Abraham returns from "the slaughter of Chedorlaomer" victorious to Laish; the captives are released, and the goods collected. None have perished; nothing is lost. In triumph, and with devout thanksgiving, he "who through faith waxed valiant in fight," and "turned to flight the armies of the aliens," marches back by Jerusalem to his tent on the plain of Mamre.[1] The curtain falls on the first act.

When the curtain rises again the stage is crowded with a mighty host. The Canaanite from the east and the west, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, and the Jebusite from the mountains, and the Hivite under Hermon, "much people, even as the sand that is upon the sea shore in multitude, with horses and chariots very many."[2] Far as the eye can reach, the plain of Merom is darkened by countless squadrons of the heathen. Confident in their numbers, they dream not of danger, when Joshua, with his valiant men of war, falls suddenly upon them. The mighty shout strikes terror into every heart. The shock is irresistible. Jabin, with his confederate kings, wakes only to join the universal rout. Those whose homes lay beyond the mountains to the north and east sought them by the great wady of the Upper Jordan, now Wady et Teim, or they crossed the ridge of Hermon, to the Haurân and the land of Mizpeh. Those from the sea-coast of Acre and Carmel fled over these hills and down south-west to Misrephoth-maim, on the northern border of the plain of Acre. Thence they dispersed to their homes along the sea-board as far south as Dor.

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[1] Gen. xiv.; Heb. xi. 33, 34.

[2] Josh. xi. 1–5.

Joshua himself chased a third division along the base of the mountain northward, past Abel-beth-maachah, through the plain of Ijon, down the gorge of the Lîtâny to the ford at Tŭmrah, or the natural bridge at the Khŭtweh, and thence over the wooded spurs of Jebel Rîhân towards great Zidon, behind whose strong walls the flying host could alone find safety. Returning southward, he stormed Hazor, and utterly consumed the city with fire.[1] The curtain drops over the burning capital of King Jabin.

And again it rises once more, revealing a scene of dark treachery and cruel slaughter. A band of daring Danites creep stealthily around the reedy margin of the marsh towards Laish. The indolent, luxurious, and demoralized citizens slumber in fatal security, soothed by the murmurs of their magnificent fountain. The mound is gained, the walls scaled, the gates burst open, the city on fire, and men, women, and children fall in indiscriminate butchery. There is no help—no mercy. They are far from their parent city, Sidon—have no business with anybody, no friends, no allies.[2] The foul work over, the murderous band sit down in quiet possession, rebuild the city, and call it Dan, after the father of their tribe. Thenceforth it became famous as the boundary on the north of the Promised Land, and "from Dan to Beer-sheba" was the proverbial limit of Israel's inheritance.[3]

I read this tragedy with feelings of indignation. True, those Phœnician dwellers in Laish were ripe for destruction. They had no government and no moral character. "There was no magistrate in the land, that might put them to shame in any thing." They deserve little commiseration, no doubt, but then those Danites were "bitter of soul and angry fellows," ready to run upon and murder Micah, whom they had plundered of his property.[4] They were also traitors to their religion and to the God of their fathers. Immediately they set up the graven image stolen from Micah; and long afterwards the golden calf of Dan became a snare to all Israel, until they were carried captive by Shalmaneser, "and placed in Halah and in Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes."[1] Dan has ceased to be a city for ages. Not one solitary habitation is there. Briers and thistles have spread over it. The fountain still pours forth its river of delicious water, and herds of black buffaloes wash and wallow in its crystal pools.

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[1] Josh. xi. 6–15. [2] Judges xviii. 7–31. [3] 1 Sam. iii. 20. [4] Judges xviii. 18–25.

Our course will now lead us through a park-like district of great beauty to the village of Meis el Jebel.

Is the character of the country west of our route the same, and are the inhabitants all Metâwileh?

It is emphatically the hill-country of Naphtali, and the people are nearly all of that sect of heretical Moslems. They are ignorant, fanatical, and exclusive, followers of 'Ali, and their faith is kindred to that of the Shîites of Persia. I can give you some idea both of the people and their territory by describing one of my excursions through that region. The governor of the district resides in the castle of Tibnîn, some twelve miles west of Hûnîn. I arrived there one evening with my family about sunset, and, to avoid the troublesome hospitality of the Beg, we passed on some distance beyond the castle, and began to pitch our tents in a spot sheltered from the sirocco wind, which commenced to blow furiously.

The Beg had seen us pass, and despatched a messenger to invite us to his palace. I sent my sincere regrets. Then came a deputation "more honorable," his secretary and a near relative, with a note from the Beg, urging the invitation so earnestly that I felt obliged to comply. This sending honorable princes to press the request reminded me at the time of the way in which Balak overcame the real or pretended reluctance of Balaam. "Balak sent yet again princes, more, and more honourable than they. And they came to Balaam, and said to him, Thus saith Balak the son of Zippor, Let nothing, I pray thee, hinder thee from coming unto me."[2] This is a very ancient and quite a common custom. In the East everything is done by mediation, and I have often been pressed and annoyed by such mediating ambassadors. Their importunity will take no denial.

The old Beg received me with the utmost politeness, descended from his divan, kissed me on both cheeks, and insisted on my shar-

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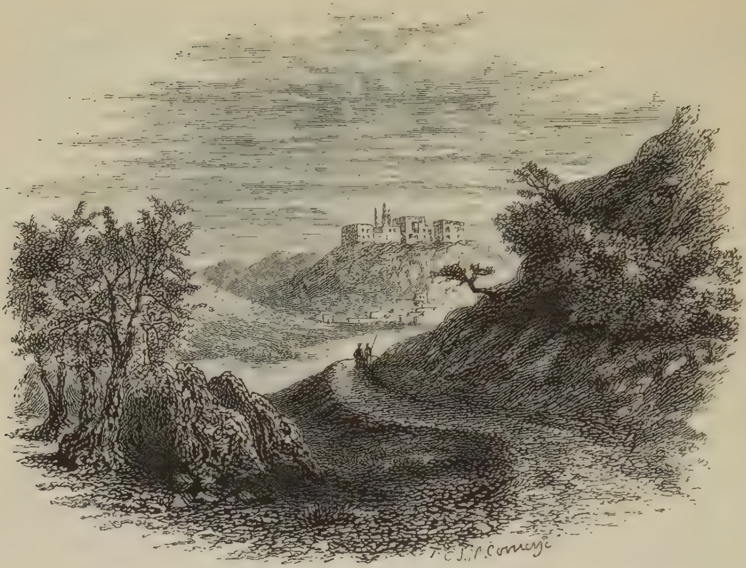
[1] 2 Kings xvii. 6.

[2] Numb. xxii. 15, 16.


T. C. J. C. Cooper

KŬL'AT TIBNÎN—CASTLE OF TORON.

ing his seat. To the best of my knowledge it was the first time I had seen him; but he insisted that he had been at my house in Beirût some fifteen years before, and that I had done him an important service by speaking a word in his behalf in the right quarter. At any rate, he was very polite. We had the usual coffee and pipes, and then he gave us a Mutawâly dinner, and kept me up till late, talking upon all sorts of topics before a full assemblage of his relatives. According to etiquette at Tibnîn, the ladies of our party had separate accommodations, and, after being served with dinner, they called on the wife of the Beg, whose apartments were in another portion of the castle. They were pleased with some of the harêm, who appeared modest, gracious, and pretty.

I was disappointed in the Beg. His conversation was incessant, loud, and often absurd. We fell at last into a rambling discussion about religion, in which Muhammed's character and prophetic claims were handled rudely enough, to the great scandal of the dervishes present; and at midnight I was glad to retire even to the same divan upon which the guests of the evening had been seated and try to sleep—no easy task, or, rather, it was impossible

The visitors had filled the divan with fleas, and the wind, which began to blow hard before we left our tents, proved to be one of those siroccos which make all kinds of insects doubly active, and man excessively nervous and sensitive. The whole night was passed in fruitless skirmishes with those contemptible enemies, and the suffocating wind piped and whistled most dolefully through every chink and cranny of the old castle. The ladies fared even worse, and the morning found us quite dejected. Having with difficulty achieved a breakfast in the midst of great confusion, we took a guide from the Beg and started for Hûnîn.

I shall not soon forget the experience of that dismal night, nor the charming ride of the next day through the romantic wadys of Naphtali. Our guide led us into a ravine, shallow at first, but one that deepened every moment, until we were completely shut in between lofty walls of gray rock. Deeper and deeper into the earth we descended for more than an hour, to where two other wadys joined the ravine — one from the south, the other from the east. The three in one trend off towards the north, and, under the name of Wady Hujeir, descend to the Lîtâny at Jisr Ka'ka'îyeh. The one from the south passes by a ruined castle called Dubbah.

Lieutenant Kitchner thus describes it: "North of Kades, on a spur running out into Wady Selûkiah, occur the ruins of a small Crusading fortress called Kŭl'at ed Dubbah. The Crusading remains of large drafted stones with rough projecting bosses are slight, and the place was probably totally destroyed when taken; it has been rebuilt under the Saracens, and these latter walls are in fair preservation. A rock-cut ditch encloses the castle. There are several cisterns and a few sarcophagi cut in the rocks near. The castle measures one hundred feet wide by two hundred and twenty feet in length, and encloses a court-yard. The position in the wady is very picturesque and romantic; high hills close it in on both sides, so that it is not visible until quite close. In the centre, on a very narrow ridge rising about half as high as the surrounding hills, stands the castle. It is so shut in by hills that I believe it never has been seen by any travellers before. To the west of the castle is the village of Shakrâ, where I obtained a copy of an inscription."

We took the eastern ravine, called Wady Hûleh—strange, wild, and romantic. The path was arched over with a canopy of leafy branches from trees and bushes, forming, with the bed of the brook whose windings we had to follow, an arcade wholly peculiar. We were often obliged to lie flat on the necks of our horses and be pulled through that verdant passage. At the end of two hours we emerged from that labyrinth, and climbed a steep and lofty hill to the village of Hûleh. We intended to rest awhile there; but such a mob of rude Metâwileh, of every age and sex, beset us, clamorous to see the seigniorât—as they call the ladies—that we were compelled to depart immediately, and, after another hour's pleasant ride, we pitched our tents amongst the oaks, olives, and terebinths on the western margin of the vale of Hûnîn.

But here we are at the extensive and comparatively thrifty village of Meis el Jebel. The road from Hâsbeiya to Acre passes through it. This unromantic pool supplies the inhabitants and their cattle with water. Every village in this region has one or more such open pools, but in very dry seasons they entirely fail, a calamity to which there is frequent allusion in the Bible. It was one of the threatened judgments upon apostate Israel that the Lord would dry up all the pools.[1]

Do the people actually drink this composition of nastiness?

They have to, and all use the water for culinary and other household purposes. Nothing is more common than to see flocks and herds standing up to their bellies in these pools, and the people filling their jars in the midst of them. I once gave five piastres to get a jar of spring-water at Hûnîn, and was cheated, and at last compelled to drink just such an abominable decoction as this. The Jews of all this region in ancient times must have been supplied with water in the same way. Natural fountains are very rare, nor can wells be dug with success. The ancient inhabitants, however, depended greatly upon cisterns, and there are countless numbers of them about the old sites. But the water, even in cisterns, is filthy, unless great care is taken to keep them clean.

There seems to be a castle here. Has it any historic name?

Not that I know of. The castle, at least in its present form, is comparatively modern. There are traces, however, of genuine antiquity about this Meis, and I doubt not there was once a Jewish town here. We must now pass on to our left, and by a blind path amongst oak and terebinth trees find our way into the pretty plain north of Kedes. Though this elevated plateau is so high above the Hûleh, it is wet and marshy in winter, and it is this, I suppose, that makes Kedes unhealthy. It may be the plain of Zaanaim which is by Kedesh, where "Heber the Kenite pitched his tent," and where Sisera received his death-blow at the hand of Jael, the wife of Heber; if, indeed, the allon in that verse should not be translated terebinth instead of plain.[1]

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[1] Isa. xlii. 15.

This is one of the passages relied on to determine the signification of that word, I believe.

The Septuagint renders it oak, not terebinth, and Zaanaim it translates robbers. So Heber pitched by the oak of the robbers. This region, however, will favor those who wish to appropriate allon to the terebinth, for there are many of those trees on the hills between this and Meis el Jebel. Ibrahim Pasha had them grafted with the pistachio from Aleppo, where that species abounds which bears the nut of the market. The peasants, however, destroyed the grafts, lest their crop of oil from the berries should be diminished, and thus defeated that attempt at agricultural improvement.

The hill on which the village of Kedes stands was once strongly fortified, and adorned with edifices very different from the wretched hovels of mud and rubbish which now shelter the inhabitants.

It is supposed to represent the old Canaanitish town of Kedesh Naphtali—is it not?—but I know very little of its history.

It has one, however, and sufficiently ancient, too. The King of Kedesh was amongst those subdued by Joshua, "on this side Jordan," in the early days of the Conquest.[2] It was afterwards assigned to Naphtali, and "appointed to be a city of refuge for the slayer."[3] Barak dwelt there; and to Kedesh he "called Zebulun and Naphtali, and went up with ten thousand men, and Deborah with him," who routed the army of Sisera in the plain of Esdraelon.[4] It was amongst the places captured by Tiglath-pileser, and the inhabitants were carried off captives to Assyria.[1] It is afterwards mentioned in the books of the Maccabees, and by Josephus, who calls it Cydessa, and speaks of it as "a strong Mediterranean village of the Tyrians, which always made war upon the Jews."[2] By Eusebius and Jerome it was known as Cydessus, a place not far from Paneas, and about ten miles from Tyre. In the times of the Crusades, Benjamin of Tudela visited this place, and found here the tomb of Barak. The tombs of Deborah and Jael were also shown here at a later period.

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[1] Judges iv. 11, 17, 21.

[2] Josh. xii. 7, 22.

[3] Josh. xx. 7; xxi. 32.

[4] Judges iv. 6, 10, 15.

The existing remains bear witness to its varied fortunes. Let us water our horses from these sarcophagi round the fountain which are now used as drinking-troughs. They may have been the last resting-place of some Jewish saints. Lieutenant Kitchner gives this description of the ruins:

"The ruins at Kades are of considerable extent. The village is situated at the end of the ridge, and below it there is a spring. A few columns and capitals are found in the village, but the principal remains occur beyond the spring [to the east]. The first building is a masonry tomb thirty-five feet square; solid piers at the four corners support round arches, which rise to a height of twenty-one feet; between these arches are the loculi, three between each, and one on either side of the door, which takes up the southern side. The arches were walled up on the outside, and the whole was probably covered with a dome. There is a niche on the outside, to the right of the door-way; a little beyond this there are several sarcophagi on a raised platform; two double and two single ones still exist; they were carved with figures, but these have been effaced.

"The next building, about one hundred yards east of the first, is the Temple of the Sun. The building forms a rectangle sixty-three feet by seventy-five feet, and one of the door-posts still standing is fifteen feet high; the masonry was large blocks of well-dressed limestone. On either side of the main entrance are two small doors with ornamented lintels; and outside these, on the left, is a niche with traces of a robed figure cut on it, and on the right a small projection has a hole leading to the interior,

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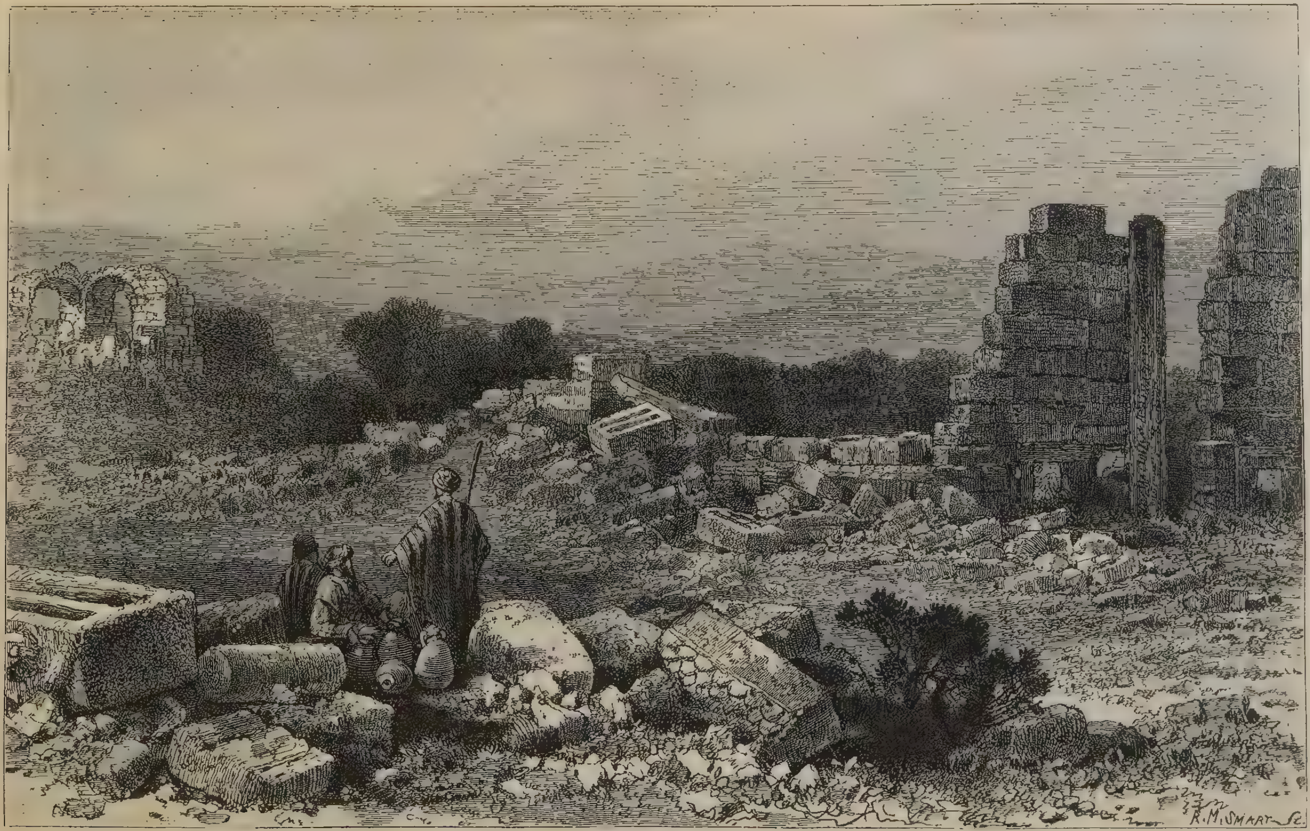
[1] 2 Kings xv. 29.

[2] B. J. iv. 2, 3.



KEDES—KEDESH.

through which money might be passed; on the inside there was a recess in the wall opposite the orifice."

Our route from Kedes to Safed lies along the base of these steep hills, and we shall soon descend into Wady el Mu'addamîyeh, one of the wildest valleys of Naphtali. It comes down from far above and beyond the village of el Jish, and its cliffs are full of caves, the favorite home of hawks and eagles. There the wild pigeons build their nests, and to them these flocks of strong, compact pigeons "fly as a cloud, and as doves to their windows."[1]

Are these the doves, and those clefts in the rock the windows, referred to by the prophet?

The Hebrew word yonah is the general name for the many varieties of doves and pigeons found in this country, except the turtle-dove, which was called tor. Ezekiel, speaking of the destruction of the Jews, says, "They that escape of them shall be on the mountains like doves of the valleys," or, as it should be, I think, the heights or lofty cliffs.[2] This variety ordinarily fly in "clouds;" and, supposing pigeons, and not turtle-doves, to be intended, we have before us both the windows and the clouds of doves which suggested the figures of the text.

When travelling in the north of Syria many years ago, I noticed in certain villages tall, square buildings, without roofs, whose walls were furnished on the inside with numberless pigeon-holes. In them nestled and bred thousands of half-tame pigeons. They were strong and swift of wing, and their foraging excursions extended many miles in every direction. It was curious to notice them returning to their "windows" like bees to their hives. I then supposed it was to such pigeon-houses full of windows that Isaiah referred, and it may have been so, but I have never seen them in Palestine. Perhaps wild pigeons would not occupy them in this region, as there are in all directions natural windows in the lofty cliffs, where they can find a safer and more congenial home. This would agree with their habits, as implied in Jeremiah's exhortation to Moab: "O ye that dwell in Moab, leave the cities, and dwell in the rock, and be like the dove that maketh her nest in the sides of the hole's mouth."[3]

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[1] Isà. lx. 8.

[2] Ezek. vii. 16.

[3] Jer. xlviii. 28.

Both Isaiah and Ezekiel speak of the mourning of the doves.[1] Is there anything peculiar in their note in this country?

The reference in Isaiah is applicable to the turtle-dove also. Its low, sad plaint may be heard all day long at certain seasons in the olive-groves, and in the solitary and shady valleys amongst the mountains; I have, however, been more impressed by it in the extensive orchards round Damascus than anywhere else—so very sorrowful is it amongst the trees, where the air sighs softly, and little rills pass by in subdued murmurs down the flowery aisles. Those birds can never be tamed. Confined in a cage, they languish; but no sooner are they set at liberty than they "flee, as a bird," to their mountains.[2] David refers to their habits in this respect when his heart was sore pained within him: "Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness."[3]

To what does Nahum allude when he says, "And Huzzab shall be led away captive, she shall be brought up, and her maids shall lead her as with the voice of doves, tabering upon their breasts?"[4]

Some suppose that Huzzab was the name of a queen of Nineveh, who was to go into captivity, led by her maidens, mourning as doves do, and tabering or striking on their breasts, a very common practice in this country. There is a foundation, however, in the habit of the dove for the comparison. When about to utter its plaintive moan the throat is inflated and thrown forward, until the head rests on and "tabers" upon the breast. In the present instance those damsels, tabering or striking on their breasts, sang sorrowful strains before their captive queen.

David speaks of a dove whose wings were "covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold."[5] I have seen none that could have suggested these comparisons.

He may have reference to a variety found at Damascus, whose feathers have the metallic lustre of silver and the gleam of gold; they are small, and kept in cages. Their note is very sad, and they keep up their cooing by night as well as by day.

Solomon repeatedly mentions the eyes of the dove: "Behold, thou art fair, my love; thou hast doves' eyes."[1] And again: "Thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks: thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead."[2] That is, her locks, and not the doves' eyes, were jet, glossy black, like the Syrian goats. The bride repeats the compliment to her beloved, and even exaggerates it: "His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk, and fitly set."[3] There is a luxuriousness about such poetic extravagance which captivates the Oriental imagination.

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[1] Isa. xxxviii. 14; lix. 11; Ezek. vii. 16.

[2] Psa. xi. 1.

[3] Psa. lv. 6, 7.

[4] Nah. ii. 7.

[5] Psa. lxviii. 13.

To the millions who devoutly sing of the "Heavenly Dove" no other symbol either in or out of the Bible suggests so much precious instruction and spiritual comfort as this innocent bird. Pure, gentle, meek, loving, and faithful, the appropriate emblem of that Holy Spirit that descended from the open heaven upon our blessed Lord at his baptism—may that Heavenly Dove

Kindle a flame of sacred love
In these cold hearts of ours.

Our pleasant discourse has brought us up from the depths of Wady Mu'addamîyeh to this poor village of 'Alma, "mentioned by Benjamin of Tudela and other Jewish travellers as containing the tombs of several holy men." Whether it be known to sacred history or not, its site is certainly that of a very ancient town. Those black tents which dot the hill-side bring to mind the children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, who left their original home in the Desert, entered Palestine with Israel, and settled first at Jericho, and then in the wilderness of Judah. Some time after, Heber severed himself from his brethren, came north, and pitched his tent at Zaanaim—plain, oak, or terebinth—near Kedes. There is a curious tradition of this lingering amongst the dwellers hereabouts, though confused, and mixed up with incredible fables. An old Mutawâly sheikh once amused me with his version of the story. It is worthy of note that such a tradition exists in this neighborhood, and it suggests the question whether the tent-dwellers here may not sustain some remote relation to Heber and his heroic wife.

We are coming out upon a very bare and desolate country. It seems quite incapable of cultivation.

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[1] Song i. 15.

[2] Song iv. 1.

[3] Song v. 12.

The path lies along the dividing ridge between the Hûleh and Wady Leimôn, or et Tawâhîn, and such places are generally barren. But if the peasants cannot grow corn, they sometimes find coin. When I last travelled this road some children had just discovered a large deposit of silver coin, of the Seleucidæ kings of Antioch, on the mountain a short distance ahead of us, and the whole country was in an uproar about it. I purchased some of the coin for the worth of the silver it contained, which was a fraction less than a dollar. But there is Safed, with its castle hill rising conspicuously in the centre. As our visit is not to the people, but to see the town and the magnificent prospect from that hill, we shall proceed to it at once. When I was here in 1833 the walls were entire, and the interior was a prison for political offenders against the recently established authority of Muhammed 'Aly. Not being of that class, I could not then gain admittance; but since that time I have often visited it, and the whole is perfectly familiar to me.

Let us tie our horses in this interior fosse, and climb to the top. You observe that the shape of the hill is a well-described oval, and the wall, which has been entirely demolished, corresponded to it. The bottom of the outer ditch is now a flourishing vineyard, and its entire circuit is not far from half a mile. The wall was mostly modern, but built on one more ancient, portions of which can be seen on the east side. The summit of the hill rises about a hundred feet higher than the surrounding wall, and on it was a separate interior castle, strongly defended.

The fortifications of Safed are supposed to have been built by the Crusaders, and garrisoned by the Knights Templars. After the battle of Hattîn, Safed capitulated to Saladin, and its inhabitants withdrew to Tyre. Since then it has suffered from the destructive influences of the Muhammedan and the earthquake.

Maundrell and others suggest that this was the "city set on a hill" which could not be hid, referred to by Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount.[1]

If that greatest of sermons was preached on the horns of Hattîn, or near them, as tradition affirms, and if a city existed here at that time, there would be plausibility enough in the suggestion, and our Lord might well point to it to illustrate and confirm his precept. The sea of Galilee lies like a mirror nearly three thousand feet below us, to the south-east, set in a framework of dark mountains and many-faced hills. Beyond Jordan is the vast region of Bashan, Gilead, and Moab, faintly shading with its rocky ranges the utmost horizon eastward and southward. Thence the eye sweeps over Samaria and Carmel, the plains of Galilee, the coasts of Phœnicia, the hills of Naphtali, the long line of Lebanon, and the lofty range of Hermon—a boundless panorama, embracing many points of historic and sacred interest.

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[1] Matt. v. 14.

Although now one of the four holy cities of the Jews, Safed became such only within the last five hundred years. They have had many synagogues here, and a school for the study of Hebrew literature; also a printing-office, dating from the sixteenth century; but all were destroyed by the earthquake in 1837. The rabbis know very little about the ancient history of the place, and nothing is more unsatisfactory than their confused and contradictory fables.

There are no antiquities in Safed, and therefore we will take a survey of its immediate surroundings, and then proceed to our tents amongst the olive-trees north of the town. From our present stand-point the sea of Galilee seems so near that one is tempted to pitch pebbles into it, and this castle has the same deceptive appearance from below. I once came here from Khân Minyeh, at the north-west corner of the lake, and without a guide. I thought I could come directly up to the castle, but soon got entangled in rocky wadys, and, after great fatigue, found myself, at the end of two hours, looking off from the supposed traditional rock of the Achabari. That precipice cannot be less than five hundred feet in perpendicular height, with many caverns in the cliffs, looking out upon the dizzy depth below. It may have been a famous den of robbers in olden time, but it is now surrendered to bats, owls, and eagles. At its base is a fountain called 'Ain Kehâly, and a single hut marks the site of an ancient town, with the Hebrew name of Hŭkŭb. The village of Kehâly lies in the wady above Achabari, and beyond it the valley turns south-west, and joins Wady Leimôn, which drains the broad basin between us and that wooded mountain, west of Safed, called Jebel Jermŭk.

The town of Safed appears to be more modern than any other that we have seen in this region.

It is, in fact, the newest. Not a house in it is much over forty years old. The old town was dashed to the ground by the earthquake in 1837, and these buildings have all been erected since that catastrophe. The prosperity of Safed is entirely owing to the constant influx of foreign Jews, drawn hither by the sanctity of the place. The population may be about five thousand, more than half of them Jews—a strange assemblage from most of the nations of Europe. They are intensely fanatical, and their social and domestic institutions and manners comprise a grotesque mingling of filth and finery, pharisaic self-righteousness and Sadducean license.

A Jew must not carry on the Sabbath even so much as a pocket-handkerchief, except within the walls of the city. If there are no walls, it follows, according to their logic, that he must not carry it at all. To avoid this difficulty here in Safed, they resorted to what they called Erŭv. Poles were set up at the ends of the streets, and strings stretched from one to the other. Those strings represented a wall, and a conscientious Jew could carry his handkerchief anywhere within their limits. I was once amused by a devout Israelite, who was walking with me, on his Sabbath, towards that grove of olive-trees where my tent was pitched then, and ours are now. When we came to the end of the street the string was gone, and so he supposed he was at liberty to go on without reference to what was in his pocket, because he had not passed the wall. The last time I was here they had abandoned that absurdity, probably to avoid the constant ridicule it brought upon them.

A profane and most quarrelsome Jew once handed me his watch to wind just after sunset on Friday evening. It was then his Sabbath, and he could not work. Thus they "pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin;" "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," making void the law of God by their traditions.[1] It was such perverse traditions as these that our Lord rebuked when he declared that "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."[2]

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[1] Matt. xv. 9; xxiii. 23; Mark vii. 7, 13; Luke xi. 42.

[2] Mark ii. 27.

XV.

SAFED TO TYRE.

Fanaticism of the Moslems at Safed.—Their Attack on Lieutenant Conder.—Their Heartlessness after the Earthquake.—Biblical Allusions to Earthquakes.—Earthquake at Safed in 1837.—"A Bowing Wall."—Earthquake at Tiberias.—"Earthquakes in Divers Places."—Moral Effects of Judgments.—Extinct Crater.—El Jish, Giscala.—Parents of the Apostle Paul.—Remains of Synagogues.—"The Abomination of Desolation."—Yârôn, Iron.—'Ain Ata, Bethanath.—Ruined Church.—Meirôn, Meiron.—Synagogue at Meirôn.—Tombs of Hillel and of Simeon.—Jewish Traditions.—Rock-cut Tombs.—Fête-day of Rabbi Simeon.—Jewish Pilgrimages to Meirôn Described by Lieutenant Kitchner.—Village of Meirôn.—Jebel Jermŭk.—'Ain el Jân.—Kefr Bir'im.—Tombs of Barak, Obadiah, and Esther.—Colonel Wilson's Description of the Synagogues at Kefr Bir'im.—The Pot of Manna.—The Paschal Lamb.—"Peace be to this House."—Mr. Spiers on Jewish Architecture.—Upper Galilee an Asylum for the Jews.—Wady Rumeish.—The Water-shed.—Geodes of Chalcedony.—Precious Stones not found in Palestine.—Appreciation of Gems by Orientals.—Rumeish.—Poison in Cheese.—Kûrah.—Broken Cisterns.—Tomb of Joshua.—Possible Site of Hazor.—Biblical History of Hazor.—El Khuraibeh.—Tell Harah.—Belâd Beshârah.—Wady el 'Ayûn.—Dilb, 'Ain Ibl, Kauzih.—Lieutenant Kitchner's Description of the Temple at Belât.—Belad Beshârah Inhabited by the Tribe of Asher.—Beit 'Aly es Sughîr.—Bint Jebeil.—The Metâwileh.—Laws of Moses concerning Things and Persons Unclean.—Dwellers without the Camp.—Case of an Old Woman at Jeba'a.—Metâwileh Women.—Fast of Ramadân.—Women Praying in Public.—The Bite of a Serpent.—"Honey out of the Rock."—The Sheepfold.—The Shepherd and the Sheep.—The Dogs of the Flock.—The Lost Sheep.—"He shall feed his Flock."—The Shepherd's Staff.—Jesus the Good Shepherd.—Kâna, Kanah of Asher.—Um el 'Awamîd.—"He shall dip his Foot in Oil."—Ancient Oil-presses.—Phœnician Inscriptions discovered by Mr. Renan.—Baal, Moloch, Ashtaroth.—Sculptures at Kâna.—Wine-vat near the Site of Old Kanah.—Making of Wine prohibited by the Moslems.—The Wine-press an Impressive Biblical Symbol.—Tomb of Hiram.—Mosaic Pavement discovered by Mr. Renan.—The Cultivation of Tobacco.—Plain and Coast of Tyre.—Râs el 'Ain.—Tell el Ma'shûk.—Roman Aqueduct.—Tell Habeish.—Er Rashîdîyeh.

May 24th.

THE tourist may leave Safed without regret. I, at least, am always glad to escape from its ominous surroundings. There is nothing of special interest about the modern Jewish community.

and the Moslem inhabitants are notorious for their fanatical insolence. Lately they made themselves infamous by a murderous attack upon Lieutenant Conder, of the Palestine Exploration Fund, and his company, which resulted in a sudden and unexpected interruption of the survey in this region. No lives were lost, though several of the party were seriously injured.

The Moslems of this place and its neighborhood acted in a most cruel and heartless manner at the time of the overthrow of Safed by the earthquake in 1837. The Government was obliged to send troops from Acre to protect the Jews and Christians from their Muhammedan neighbors, who robbed and plundered on all sides, even while the earth shook and trembled, and the shattered houses were falling upon their doomed occupants.

I should like to hear something about that awful catastrophe.

Such terrible calamities have often occurred in this country, and are frequently alluded to in the Bible. At the giving of the Law "mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly."[1] Then the earth shook, sings Israel's great poet; even Sinai itself was moved "at the presence of the Lord, the God of Jacob. The mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs."[2] On that memorable day, when "Jonathan and his armour bearer" overthrew the Philistines, "the earth quaked: so it was a very great trembling."[3] And when the Lord appeared to Elijah on Horeb, "a strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks; and after the wind an earthquake."[4] Isaiah also threatens "Ariel, the city where David dwelt," with this awful judgment;[5] and Amos says he "was among the herdmen of Tekoa two years before the earthquake;"[6] to which Zechariah refers when he says, "Yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah."[7]

Josephus mentions a terribly destructive earthquake that occurred in the reign of Herod the Great, about thirty-one years before the Christian era, at the time of the battle of Actium, between

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[1] Exod. xix. 18.
[2] Psa. cxiv. 4, 6, 7.
[3] 1 Sam. xiv. 15.
[4] 1 Kings xix. 11.
[5] Isa. xxix. 1, 6.
[6] Amos i. 1.
[7] Zech. xiv. 5.

Octavius Cæsar and Marc Antony. "Then there was also an earthquake in Judea, such a one as had not happened at any other time, and which earthquake brought a great destruction upon the cattle in that country. About ten thousand men perished by the fall of houses."[1] He alludes to the same thing in the first Book of his Wars of the Jews, and there says that the number of men killed was thirty thousand.[2] And so, too, after the crucifixion of our blessed Lord, "there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour. Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened."[3]

So far as my knowledge goes, earthquakes, in this land of heavy stone houses, are by far the most awful of all calamities. Before them the very "knees of terror quake." All hearts fail, and the boldest fly in dismay, and the timid are paralyzed with fear. The destruction of Safed furnished a most impressive illustration of the poetic imagery and prophetic comminations which the Hebrew writers derived from the earthquake.

It was just before sunset on a quiet Sabbath evening—January 1st, 1837—when the shock occurred. A pale, smoky haze obscured the sun and threw an air of sadness over the closing day, and a lifeless and oppressive calm had settled down upon the face of nature. The native church-members at Beirût were gathered round the communion-table, when suddenly the house began to shake, and the stone floor to undulate like the waves of the sea. Hezzy! hezzy!—an earthquake! an earthquake!—burst from every trembling lip as all rushed out into the open air. The house was cracked from top to bottom, but no further injury was sustained. The shock was comparatively slight in Beirût, but still many houses were seriously shattered, and some near the river entirely thrown down. During the week succeeding that Sabbath there came rumors from various quarters of towns and villages destroyed and lives lost; but so slow does information travel in this country, especially in winter, that it was not until eight days had elapsed that any reliable accounts from this region were received. Then letters arrived from Safed with the startling intelligence that the town had been overthrown, and that Tiberias, and many other places in the neighborhood, had shared the same fate.

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[1] Ant. xv. 5, 2.

[2] B. J. i. 19, 3.

[3] Matt. xxvii. 45, 50–52.

Collections were made at Beirût, and Mr. Calman and myself were selected to visit this region, and relieve the wants of the needy and the wounded. Passing by Sidon, we associated with ourselves Mr. Abéla and two of his sons, to act as physicians. In Sidon the work of destruction became very noticeable, and in Tyre still more so. We rode into the latter town at midnight over prostrate walls, and found some of the streets so choked up with fallen houses that we could not pass through them. I retain a vivid recollection of that dismal night. The people were living in boats drawn up on the shore, and in tents near them, while half-suspended shutters and doors were banging and creaking, and the wind, which had risen to a cold and furious gale, howled through the shattered walls and broken arches of ruined Tyre.

On the 17th we reached Rumeish, where we witnessed the first real confirmation of the letters from Safed. The village seemed quite destroyed. Thirty people had been crushed to death under their falling houses, and many more would have shared the same fate if they had not been at evening prayers in church. The building was low and compact, so that it was not seriously injured. After distributing medicine to the wounded and charity to the destitute, we went on to el Jish. Of that village not one house remained; all had been thrown down, and the church also, burying the entire congregation of one hundred and thirty-five persons under the ruins. None escaped except the priest, who was saved by a projection of the arch over the altar. The entire vaulted roof, with its mass of superincumbent stone and earth, fell inward in a moment, and of course escape was impossible. Fourteen dead bodies still lay there unburied.

On the morning of the 18th we reached Safed, and I then understood, for the first time, what desolation God can work "when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth." Just before we began to ascend the hill we met our consular agent of Sidon returning with his widowed and childless sister. Her husband, a merchant of Safed, had been partially buried under the ruins of his house, and in that state he remained some days, calling in vain for help, and finally perished. As we ascended the hill we saw rents and cracks in the rocks and earth, and, though not so large as a fissure at Jish which I examined that morning, still they gave fearful indications of what was to be expected. But all anticipation was utterly confounded when we came within sight of the doomed town. I had refused to give full credit to the reports, but one glance convinced me that it was not in the power of language to exaggerate such ruin.

We went first to the Jewish half of the town, which contained about four thousand inhabitants two years before, when I was there, and seemed like a hive of busy Israelites; now not a house remained standing. The town was built, as its successor is, upon the side of the mountain, which is so steep that in many places the roofs of the houses below formed the street for those above; when, therefore, the shock dashed all to the ground, the highest fell on the next below, that upon the third, and so on to the bottom, burying each successive row of houses deeper and deeper under accumulated masses of rubbish. From that cause it happened that many who were not instantly killed perished before they could be rescued, and it was said that others were found five, six, and even seven days after the earthquake, still alive.

A resident of Safed told me that he found his wife dead, with one child under her arm, and her babe at the breast: it had died of hunger, trying to draw nourishment from its lifeless mother. Parents heard the cry of their little ones grow fainter and fainter, until hushed in death, while they were struggling to free themselves, or laboring with desperate energy to throw off the fallen rocks and timbers from their dying children. My heart even now sickens at the thought of that long, black winter's night which closed around the wretched remnants of Safed half an hour after the overthrow—without a light or the possibility of getting one, four-fifths of the population under the ruins, dead or dying, and the earth trembling and shaking all the while, as if affrighted at the desolation that had been wrought.

Nothing met the eye but a mass of earth and stone, timber and boards, tables, chairs, beds, clothing, and every kind of household furniture, all mingled in utter confusion; men everywhere at work, worn out and woe-begone, uncovering their houses in search of the lifeless bodies of their friends, while here and there were companies of two or three, bearing away the mangled remains to the tomb. Some wept in despair, others laughed in callousness still more distressing; here an old man sat alone on the wreck of what was once his home; and there was a child at play, too young to realize that it had neither father nor mother, nor relative of any name in the world. They crowded round us with loud lamentations—husbands without wives, wives without husbands; parents childless, and children without parents, and some were left the solitary remnants of large families. The people were scattered abroad on the terraces above and below the ruins, in tents of old boards, old carpets, mats, and brush; while a few poor creatures, wounded and bruised, were left amongst the tottering walls, exposed to a horrible death from the loose and falling stones above them.

As soon as our tent was pitched and the medicines and stores unpacked we set out to visit the sufferers. But I have no heart to recall the sights and scenes of that morning. The victims—crowded into old vaults, where the air was tainted beyond endurance, their bodies crushed and swollen, and in every stage of mortification—were dying hourly without hope of relief. We soon returned, and commenced arrangements to erect a temporary hospital, without which it was useless to attempt anything for the sufferers. On that we all labored, and the next day it was ready for their reception. Having collected them into it, and distributed medicines and bandages, we placed them under the care of a native doctor hired for the purpose, and then left for Tiberias.

We carried away with us a most vivid impression in regard to "bowing walls." David says of the wicked who "imagine mischief against a man," "as a bowing wall shall ye be;" and the comparison is expanded and the threatening greatly intensified by the prophet Isaiah: "Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant."[1] With trembling haste we passed under many such a "swelling out in a high wall," while groping about for the mangled but still living victims of that awful overthrow at Sa-

[1] Psa. lxii. 3; Isa. xxx. 13.

fed; and we were devoutly thankful to escape from those painful and perilous scenes.

It was most refreshing to breathe once more the pure air of the open country, free from the horrible sights and scents of Safed. Nor shall I soon forget that pleasant ride to Tiberias, particularly in the evening, and along the shore of the lake. Gennesaret lay like infancy asleep. The sun sank quietly down behind the hills of Nazareth, and the full-moon shone fitfully through the hazy atmosphere on land and lake, faintly revealing the scenes where the Saviour of men had compassion on the multitude, and healed all manner of disease.

The destruction of life in Tiberias had not been so great as at Safed, but the houses and walls of the city were fearfully shattered. About six hundred perished under the ruins, and there were scenes of individual suffering not exceeded by any in Safed. Many of the wounded had been carried down to the hot baths, where we visited them. I was informed that at the time of the earthquake the quantity of water at those springs was largely increased, and that it was so hot that people could not pass on that part of the road across which it had overflowed. That, I suppose, was the fact; but the reports that boiling water and smoke were seen to issue from many places, and flames of fire from others, were fabrications. No one had actually seen those phenomena, though all had heard of them.

On the 22d we left Tiberias, and reached Nazareth in the night, having distributed medicines and clothes at Lûbieh, esh Shajerah, Kefr Kenna, and er Reineh. In all those villages, except Kefr Kenna, the earthquake had been very destructive, while in others on either side no injury had been sustained. This erratic and apparently capricious course led one of my companions to remark that it was the exact fulfilment of our Lord's words in Matthew xxiv. 7: "There shall be earthquakes in divers places." There may be something in the geological formation of those plains and mountains which occasioned such exceptions; but, whether they can or cannot explain the phenomenon, the fact is certain that some villages were entirely destroyed, and others close to them suffered no injury. Similar occurrences in ancient times may have suggested, or rather may have rendered the prophecy of our Lord appropriate. At Nazareth our mission terminated, and we returned by the ordinary route to Beirût, having been absent eighteen days, in the middle of winter, with bright, clear weather, so that even on the mountains we were able to sleep in the tent without inconvenience.

I have somewhere seen it stated that terrible judgments, instead of softening the heart and working reformation in the life, produce effects the very reverse.

In this case it did so to an extraordinary degree. It was painful to witness the intense selfishness and rascality developed. The survivors in the surrounding villages left their friends to die amidst their own crumbling houses, and hurried to Safed to strip the dead and plunder the living. Ibrahim Pasha sent a detachment of troops from Acre to protect the Jews from robbery and murder, but they themselves were utterly callous in regard to their fellow-sufferers. It is scarcely credible, and yet it is a fact, that after we had labored night and day to erect the hospital, we had to carry the wounded to it ourselves, or pay their surviving friends to do it. So far as my experience goes—and wars, pestilence, cholera, and earthquakes have given me many opportunities to observe—this people will not learn righteousness when such judgments are abroad in the land.

But let us banish these painful topics, and give some attention to the region around us. Have you noticed that the road since we descended from the hill of Safed has led us through a vast field of black lava bowlders? Here on our right is a deep basin supposed to be an extinct crater, and possibly the centre of volcanic disturbance for all this region. Birket el Jish, as this depression is now called, is about three hundred feet in diameter, and forty feet deep; during the rainy season it is sometimes filled with water; hence its name, the pool of el Jish.

That village ahead of us, on its cone-shaped hill, is el Jish, the Gush Halab of the Talmud, and the modern representative of Giscala, the native place of John, an enemy of Josephus. It was fortified by him, and was the last place in Galilee that surrendered to the Romans under Titus. According to Jerome, the parents of the Apostle Paul lived in Giscala. It has been visited by Lieutenant Kitchner, who says of the church, the roof of which fell in and buried the congregation alive at the time of the earthquake, that it is "probably built on the site of an old synagogue."

There are also "the remains of another synagogue on the western slope of the descent to Wady el Jish." On a detached stone of that synagogue is the representation "in relief of an eagle, resembling a Roman standard." This discovery "adds new proof that these buildings are due to Roman influence over a subjugated people;" and it may afford a striking illustration of the prophetic words of Christ, foretelling the destruction of the Temple: "When ye shall see the abomination of desolation stand in the holy place, then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains."[1]

Here, on the right, a road turns off north-west to Yârôn, which is about an hour and a quarter in that direction. It is, no doubt, the Iron given to Naphtali, and farther north is 'Ain Ata, the Beth-anath of the same tribe. Beyond it is Bint Jebeîl, the capital of this district. At Yârôn there is a ruin called ed Deir. It was a church, and differs from all others in the country. The length is eighty-eight feet, the width fifty, with a double extension southward: the first twenty feet broad, and extending the whole length of the church; the other thirteen feet wide and fifty-five long, evidently a portico in front of the main entrance, supported by six columns. There were three doors on the west side, and a double row of columns extended from the wall in front of the doors to the altar; the entrances have posts eight feet high, and all of single, upright blocks, like those of the synagogues at Kefr Bir'im, Meirôn, and other places in this region. The architecture is Corinthian, and I noticed the Greek cross on some of the capitals. The remains lie about the hill, and upon the embankment of the rock-cut cistern or birkeh. One stone, curiously carved, measured fourteen feet long. There are also many sarcophagi in the neighborhood. That whole region is full of ancient sites, most of them, however, unknown to history, either sacred or profane.

About two hours due south of el Jish is the village of Meirôn. I once went to it from the south, and pitched my tent amongst the ruins of an old synagogue, near the west end of the old town. The remains of that ancient town are quite extensive, and of a very old appearance, more remarkable since the material of which it was constructed is an extremely compact limestone. It was the Meirôn of the Talmud, and probably the Meroth of Josephus, a place which he fortified in Galilee, and which he mentions in connection with Giscala, now the village of el Jish.

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[1] Matt. xxiv. 15, 16.

RUINS OF THE SYNAGOGUE AT MEIRÔN.

The synagogue "was built on a rocky ledge, the west side and the floor being excavated out of the rock. The eastern and southern walls, built on unstable, made-up ground, have been entirely destroyed by time."[1] It was about ninety-three feet long and forty-seven feet wide. Broken columns and portions of the cornice lie scattered all about. The only portion now standing is a noble entrance, facing the south-east. It was built of large limestone blocks, cut smooth, and having a heavy entablature ornamented with bead-work. This entrance was ten feet high and six feet wide. The side-posts were monoliths, and the lintel was a single stone more than thirteen feet long and four feet thick.

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[1] Lieutenant Kitchner's Reports.

Meirôn owes all its celebrity amongst the Jews to the sepulchres of venerated rabbis who are supposed to have been buried there. Amongst them is that of Rabbi Hillel, the grandfather of Gamaliel, at whose feet the Apostle Paul was "taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers."[1] When I was at Meirôn there were then some rabbis from Safed and a few Jewish pilgrims from different parts of the country. The chief rabbi told me that Rabbi Simeon Ben Jochai, the reputed author of the book Zohar, died about fifty years after the destruction of Jerusalem, and was buried in one of the tombs beneath the modern building now used for the celebration of his fête-day. The same rabbi informed me that Safed was Jotapata, where Josephus was captured by the Romans; and when reminded of circumstances in that author's account which conflicted with his statement, he replied that there were two places of the same name, but that Safed was the original Jotapata, and from that fact its holy character was derived. This is a specimen of the conversation with which he entertained me until late in the evening.

A few rods south-west of the modern building is a remarkable collection of rock-cut tombs. From an antechamber, partially broken away, a low door admits into a large room, about thirty feet long and twenty feet wide; and on the northern side, opposite the entrance to it, is a tunnel, which leads twenty feet farther into the cliff. There are eight graves on either side of the large room, and on the east and west of the entrance to the tunnel are wide recesses, with four graves in the floor of each, which are covered with heavy stone lids about seven feet long, and are in shape like the lids of modern coffins, but having an elevation at each of the four corners. These lids are quite perfect, and are wedged tightly in the floor, side by side, and seem never to have been disturbed. The tunnel has no side-niches, but in the floor are five short graves, the lids of which are gone. On the outside of the entrance to the large room are four graves and four lids on either side, eight in all. So that there are thirty-two graves with lids, and five without, in this remarkable collection of rock-cut tombs.

It is curious that this entire series of tombs is often flooded with water. It was so when I was there, and I was obliged to wade knee-deep in order to examine some of the graves and lids.

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[1] Acts xxii. 3.

The modern building now used by the Jews has been enlarged and greatly changed in appearance since Dr. Hacket visited it. It then consisted of a long building, with a range of rooms on its west side. Lately there have been rooms erected opposite to those, on the east side, and the north end has been walled in, so that the interior is an oblong hollow square. Those new rooms are vaulted over with round domes, plastered and whitewashed. There are six of them, and they give a singular appearance to the entire enclosure. There are two columns on the roof of the modern building, about five feet high, with stone basins or urns on the top, and it is in those urns that the burning of votive offerings by the Jewish pilgrims takes place. These consist of silks, cashmere shawls, and articles of wearing apparel. Only a few days before my visit many garments had been consumed, and the ashes were still in the urns. The great burning, however, is performed on the fête-day of Rabbi Simeon Ben Jochai.

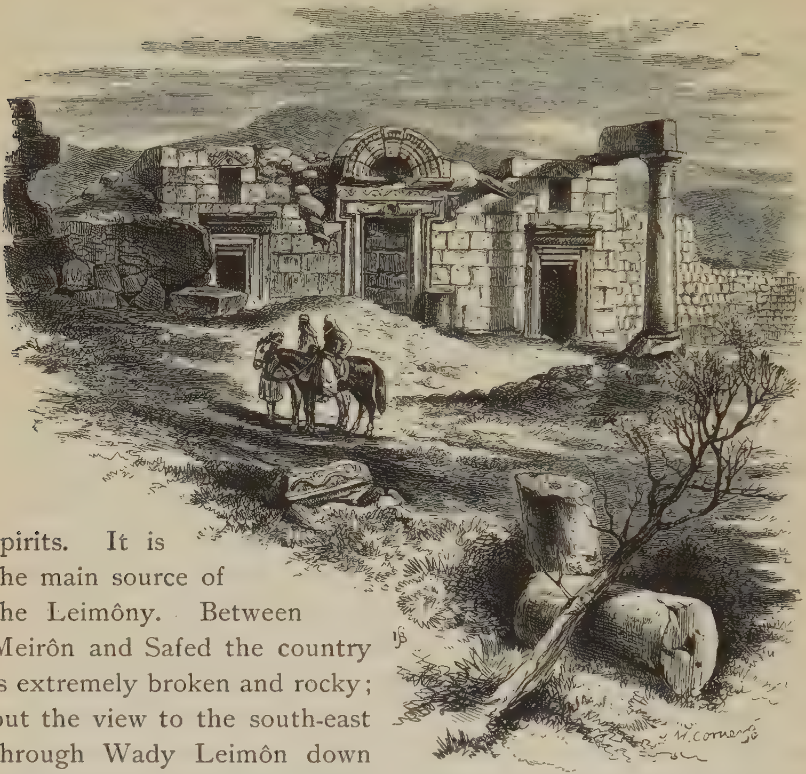
Professor Hacket gives a graphic account of the ceremonies at that festival: "The apartment over the graves was lighted up by many lamps, and around the court were stalls filled with people, their beds, and their travelling equipments. The pilgrims gave themselves up to intoxication, singing, dancing, and clapping of hands, while some more warlike kept up an exhibition of sword-play. After dark the crowd filled the court, stalls, gallery, and corridor almost to suffocation. A pillar supporting a stone trough stood at one corner of the gallery, and near it a vessel with oil, in which the articles to be burnt were first dipped. At a given signal a man with a blazing torch mounted the stairs to the gallery, and all were now eager with expectation. The first article burnt was a costly shawl, the offering of a rich Jew from Joppa, who had paid about two thousand piastres for the privilege of opening the ceremony. As the shawl began to blaze, the multitude shouted, men clapped their hands, and the zulaghît of the women—a shrill, tremulous cry, which one hears only in this country—made the welkin ring. Other offerings—shawls, scarfs, handkerchiefs, books, and the like—were brought forward, dipped in oil, and consumed, while from time to time, as an article was seen to be of special value, or burnt with uncommon brilliancy, the spectators broke forth into renewed expressions of delight."

Thus this work of folly and drunken madness went on until our informant was obliged to leave. It is, in fact, kept up all night; but I have not been able to ascertain the real significance of that most absurd festival. It is, of course, intended to honor the great rabbi whose tomb is said to be there, and is also connected with some vague ideas of merit, by which the donors will derive some benefit from the prayers or intercessions of their saints, an error found amongst all Oriental sects in one form or another.

Lieutenant Kitchner says that while he was at Meirôn the festival began "on the 30th of April, and lasted three days. The Jews arrived in thousands, on foot, on donkeys, mules, horses, or camels; some came from great distances—it was said, even from England. The governor arrived to keep order, and a guard of soldiers protected the road. This was no unnecessary precaution, as the first day they brought in an Arab [Bedawîn] they had shot while rifling some stragglers on the line."

After describing the night scene at the festival, he says of the men that "they ran round and round in circles, holding each others' hands; they were all dressed in dirty, long dressing-gowns and huge felt hats. Lit up by the blazing torches, they had a most grotesque appearance. The contrast between these intensely excited Jews, some of them apparently intoxicated, and the solemn, unmoved serenity of the Turkish governor and officials, was very striking. The women occupied the upper chambers, and seemed more devout; some of them were engaged in prayer."

The village of Meirôn is inhabited by Muhammedans, and is situated at the eastern base of Jebel Jermŭk, which rises some fifteen hundred feet immediately above it. The elevation of the place is at least two thousand five hundred feet above the sea, and the evening air on the 23d of June I found was cool and bracing. Three ravines descend from the dark wooded Jebel Jermŭk and meet in the deep gorge below. A fine fountain bursts out from the one directly beneath the village, called 'Ain el Jân, because its irregular flow is supposed to be influenced by those capricious



RUINED SYNAGOGUE AT KEFR BIR'IM.

spirits. It is the main source of the Leimôny. Between Meirôn and Safed the country is extremely broken and rocky; but the view to the south-east through Wady Leimôn down to the Lake of Tiberias is varied, picturesque, and striking.

Here we are at Kefr Bir'im. It has taken us three hours and a quarter to ride to it from Safed; the distance, however, is not more than nine miles. According to Dr. Robinson, "Kefr Bir'im was for many centuries a place of Jewish pilgrimage. In 1210 it is spoken of as containing the tombs of Barak and Obadiah the prophet; and also a beautiful synagogue erected by Rabbi Simeon Ben Jochai." In the sixteenth century the tomb of Queen Esther is mentioned amongst others, also the ruins of two synagogues; and it is related "that the Jews of Safed made an annual pilgrimage hither at Purim, and were accustomed on this occasion 'to eat, drink, and rejoice.'"[1]

Kefr Bir'im is now inhabited by Maronites, and is in a prosperous condition. There are here the remains of two synagogues, and it is quite possible that they are the ones referred to. The principal one is amongst the houses of the village, "and a hovel, entered by one of the side-doors, now occupies a portion of its area." Colonel Wilson remarks that it "is the most perfect remain of the kind in Palestine. The southern face, with its three doors, though much shaken, is nearly entire. There is part of a porch, and, by a small excavation, the course of the surrounding wall was traced. Two of the columns at the northern end are *in situ.* The court in front of the entrance is sunk fifteen inches below the ground-line, and is reached by four broad steps."

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[1] Rob. Res. vol. iii. p. 71.

It was about sixty-four feet long by fifty broad, and the entrance was from the south. The interior was divided into five aisles by four rows of columns. The walls were two and a half feet thick, of the native limestone; the stones were "chiselled in," and set without mortar. "Above the centre door there is a semicircular relieving arch, with several mouldings carried round its face. It is the only instance in which a door-way remains entire." On the lintel "is a wreath with two lambs, defaced, and above this a moulding with a scroll of vine leaves, with bunches of grapes, and at one end a vase, perhaps the pot of manna."[1]

We will now ride a short distance to the north-east of the village, and visit the small synagogue. It measured about fifty-four feet by forty-one, and is now entirely prostrate, except the entrance, which is "eleven feet high and five feet broad." "The door-posts and lintel are still standing, and there are two pedestals *in situ*." The lintel is a single stone, about ten feet long, upon which is "some defaced sculpture, which evidently represents two animals lying down on either side of an open flower, possibly intended for the Paschal Lamb." The Hebrew inscription on this lintel, "Peace be upon this dwelling-place," recalls vividly to mind the words of Christ to his Apostles and the seventy, whom he sent forth to work miracles and to preach: "Into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house."[2]

According to Colonel Wilson, "this building appears to have had only two rows of columns, three aisles, and one door. In the interior are remains of pedestals, columns, and capitals." It is generally supposed that these synagogues were erected in the second or third century, when this entire region was occupied by Jews. Mr. R. Phené Spiers, however, in his article on "The Architectural Remains of Palestine," places the date as late as the fifth or sixth century. He says "the carving on the lintel [of the central doors] of the animals (Paschal lambs) on each side of a central flower is peculiar, and probably Jewish in idea." Mr. Spiers further remarks "that the Jews had no style of their own, but borrowed on every side, and made such compositions as we see often at the present day, when in one single building the details of many different styles or periods of a style are found jumbled up together without rhyme or reason."[1]

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[1] Colonel Wilson's Reports.

[2] Matt. x. 12, 13; Luke x. 5.

DOOR-POSTS AND LINTEL OF RUINED SYNAGOGUE.

We are now passing away from this region of Galilean synagogues, and our route hence to Tyre leads through the western part of Naphtali, and across the lot of Asher, where traces of Jewish occupation are few and unimportant.

How do you account for the residence of Jews in such numbers in this region so long after they had been banished from other parts of Palestine?

I suppose the armies of Vespasian and Titus did not penetrate far into these wild northern mountains. After the capture of Jotapata they seem to have descended to the Lake of Tiberias, and marched to the attack of Gamala, on the eastern shore of it. When Titus had taken and destroyed that stronghold he led his army southward towards Jerusalem, and thus this region of Upper Galilee escaped devastation. No doubt, also, many of the people fled from those places farther south, which were overthrown by the Romans, into these inaccessible mountains, where, finding a safe refuge, they remained and settled permanently.

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[1] Rec. of Jer. pp. 316, 317.

Their numbers were further increased during the second century, when, upon the suppression of the rebellion under Bar-cochaba, the Jews were forbidden, on pain of death, to reside anywhere in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, or even approach their Holy City. Their great theological schools in Jamnia were broken up, nor could their national Sanhedrim convene there or at any other place on the plain of Philistia. But here, in Upper Galilee, they were able to reside in peace; and the venerated sepulchres of their great rabbis at Meirôn, and elsewhere, would naturally attract many of the more devout Jews to them.

Judging from the substantial character and the architectural ornamentation of their synagogues, the Jews in this region must have been not only numerous but prosperous and wealthy.

They appear to have lived here in comparative peace and safety for several hundred years, down to the conquest of the Muhammedans in the seventh century. Nor have they entirely abandoned it, although now found only in Safed and Tiberias.

What is the name of this valley which we have followed since leaving Kefr Bir'im?

It is here called Wady Rumeish, from a village of that name to which we will soon come. This region abounds in such valleys, and they generally have local names, derived from villages, fountains, or ruins in or near them. This is the first wady we have entered in this district whose waters flow westward into the Mediterranean. The country eastward of Kefr Bir'im is drained by Wady Leimôn into Lake Tiberias, and is there called Wady el 'Amûd.

Very familiar to me is this valley, for in certain parts of it are beautiful geodes of chalcedony, which I have spent several days, first and last, in gathering. In the spring of 1838 I sent four donkey-loads to Beirût, and from there they have been dispersed by friends to many parts of the world. Several years ago I discovered another locality of those geodes extending from Jisr el Kŭr'ûn up to the south end of the Bukâ'a, at Jubb Jenîn. The whole country there for many miles is literally covered with them, from the size of a walnut to that of a large melon—chalcedony enough to suggest to the mind the building of the third foundation in the wall of the New Jerusalem.[1]

I have not seen any of the precious stones mentioned in the Bible during our rambles through the country.

But few, if any, of them are to be found in Palestine. Jasper and agate I have seen in great variety, and beautiful specimens are found along the southern and eastern base of Mount Casius, north of el Lâdikîyeh, and in other places; but the precious stones employed by Moses in making the high-priest's breastplate, and in ornamenting the priestly garments, were doubtless procured from Egypt, Arabia, and India, where they still abound. In our translation, and in every other with which I am acquainted, the same Hebrew word is made to stand for entirely different gems, and lexicographers and commentators are uncertain in regard to them.

It is worthy of remark that Orientals in ancient times paid far more attention to gems than we are accustomed to bestow upon them in our day and country. And the same is true with the natives around us. I venture to say that this donkey-boy coming to meet us could astonish many Bible-readers in other lands by his familiarity with the names, appearance, and relative value of precious stones such as those mentioned in the Word of God. We need not be surprised, therefore, at the frequent reference to them by unlettered prophets and apostles. John was not a lapidary, and yet he is perfectly at home amongst precious stones, and gives a list which has and does still puzzle our wisest scholars.

Rumeish, a thriving Maronite village, is finely situated on a grassy plain at the western end of the valley of the same name; but my recollections of the place are not the most agreeable. It suffered severely during the earthquake in 1837. Many of the inhabitants were crushed to death by falling houses, and more injured beyond hope of recovery. We rendered the survivors what aid was in our power when we were on our way to Safed. On a later occasion some of our party were poisoned there by verdigris in fresh cheese. We have no occasion to enter the village, and, passing it on the left, we will turn down the valley northward.

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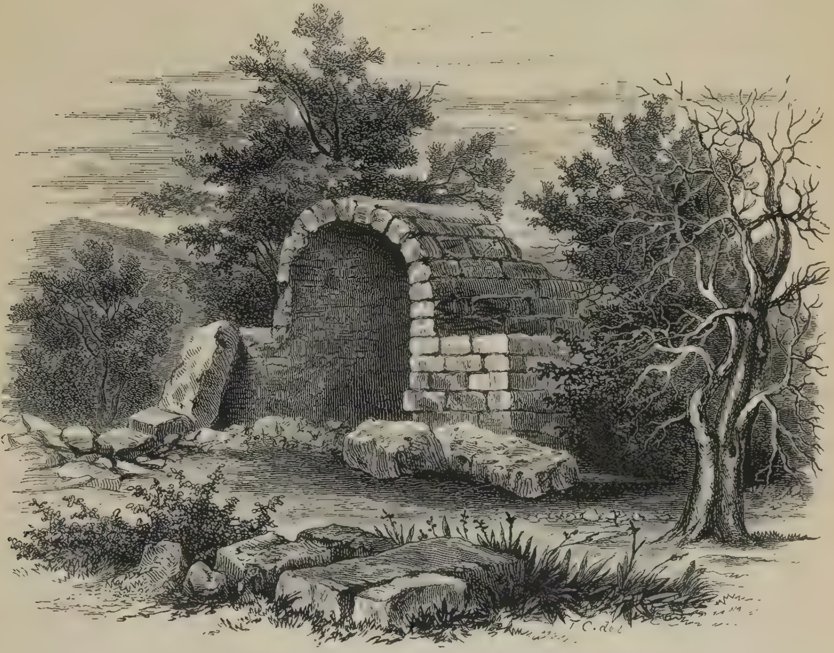
[1] Rev. xxi. 19.



KABR NEBY HŬZZÛR, NEAR THE RUINS OF HAZÎREH.

Half an hour farther, at the junction of two valleys, is an old site called el Kûrah, situated on a tell. There is not even the trace of a house left, but the hill is honeycombed with demijohn-shaped cisterns. Though hewn out of the cretaceous rock, and otherwise quite perfect in appearance, they are "broken cisterns, that can hold no water."[1] The only other site in this neighborhood of any importance is the arch or kabr of Hŭzzûr, with the ruins of Hazîreh around it. It is situate midway between Dilb, 'Ain Ibl, and Kauzih. The remains of this ancient site lie in a wide natural basin, and spread up the hill-side towards the south. Heaps of hewn stone, old and disintegrating, open cisterns cut in the rock, and deep wells—these are some of the indications of an ancient place.

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[1] Jer. ii. 13.

Kabr Hŭzzûr is a large cave, with an arch over the entrance, and a vaulted way leading into it, and is now a muzzâr belonging to the Metâwileh. I inquired of an old sheikh, who was ploughing in an adjacent field, what was the name of the saint to whom the place was dedicated. In a voice loud and bold, as if to dispel all doubt, he replied, "Neby Hŭzzûr, who fought against Yeshû'a Ibn Nûn"—Joshua, the son of Nun. This native tradition suggests the possible identity of Hŭzzûr with the Hazor that "was beforetime at the head of all those kingdoms" whose combined armies were overthrown by Joshua "at the waters of Merom."[1]

Although that capital of King Jabin was the only one of all the captured cities which Joshua burnt with fire, it must have recovered rapidly, for another Jabin reigned in Hazor, and cruelly oppressed the Israelites, in the days of Deborah. Barak routed his army on the plain of Esdraelon, and Sisera, his chief captain, fled on foot to the tent of Heber the Kenite, where he was slain by the heroic Jael. Josephus adds to the Biblical account of the battle that Barak killed Jabin in Hazor, and utterly destroyed the city. If so, it again recovered, and was subsequently fortified by Solomon. It is named for the last time in Biblical history amongst those cities which "Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria came and took and carried them [the inhabitants] captive to Assyria."[2] Hazor was one of "the fenced cities" assigned to Naphtali;[3] and Josephus says that it "lay over the lake Semechonitis," that is the Hûleh.[4]

Dr. Robinson objects to the identification of Hŭzzûr with Hazor on the ground that "this spot is remote from the Hûleh, and in the tribe of Asher." He locates Hazor on the summit of a tell, overlooking the Hûleh, and an hour south of Kedes, where there is a ruin called el Khuraibeh, the little ruin. Colonel Wilson regards Tell Harah, two miles south-east of Kedes, as the Biblical Hazor. It is certainly remarkable that the site of a city so celebrated in Hebrew history, and whose possible position is defined within comparatively narrow limits, should, nevertheless, be so utterly lost as to baffle all efforts to discover it.

[1] Josh. xi. 1–15. [2] 2 Kings xv. 29. [3] Josh. xix. 35–39. [4] Ant. v. 5, 1.

We have now entered Belâd Beshârah, a district that extends across the lot of Asher from the river Lîtâny southward to the Ladder of Tyre—a wild, rough country, cut up by numberless ravines which descend northward into the river gorge, or turn westward and plunge down to the sea. Lofty cliffs rise on either side of the ravines, ragged and bare in some places, and in others clothed to their very base, forming deep wadys, through whose tangled labyrinths the traveller must force his way. Our own path leads into one of them called Wady el 'Ayûn, the valley of fountains, which we must follow for the next hour. Numerous small villages nestle in hidden nooks and sheltered recesses of the mountains, adding unexpected variety to a ride which I have always delighted to take. We have around us quite a conspicuous trio of such hamlets—Dilb and 'Ain Ibl on the right, and Kauzih, high up the hill, on the left. Beyond it the well-wooded Mount of Belât, crowned with the picturesque ruins of an ancient temple, overlooks the country in all directions.

Of that temple Lieutenant Kitchner writes: "The most extraordinary ruins of this neighborhood are those of Belât (marble), which have been described by Dr. Robinson ("Later Biblical Researches," p. 65). On the top of a high, wooded ridge are the ruins of what must have been a noble temple. The remains of sixteen columns are apparently *in situ*, and six of them still bear an architrave. If the building was originally uniform it would have been formed of a double colonnade of twelve columns, the intercolumnar distance varying from six to eight feet. The total length of the colonnade is ninety-nine feet seven inches, and its breadth sixteen feet; the whole is surrounded by a wall at a distance of seven feet. The columns and architrave make a total height of fourteen feet six inches.

"The entrance was probably in the centre of the eastern side, where two columns are squared on the outside—it was probably double, with a round column between. The end columns at both ends of the colonnade were squared on the outside, forming a double column on the inside, exactly the same as in Jewish synagogues, such as at Kefr Bir'im, where the southern columns of the portico were two double columns, corresponding with those at the north end of the building. Another point of resemblance is the direction of the colonnade, being within twelve degrees of north and south. The columns are very much weathered, and some of them are considerably out of the perpendicular. There seems to have been no elaborate decoration—the architrave is not cut, and the capitals are simply rounded blocks of stone."

Have any of these hamlets names that connect them with Biblical history? This is the first question that arises spontaneously when we enter into any new district.

Although this whole region was occupied by the tribe of Asher, we must not expect to find many Biblical names lingering about it, for the list of places given to that tribe, and recorded in the nineteenth chapter of Joshua, is very limited. We may be quite certain, however, that the wild wadys and romantic hills of Belâd Beshârah were once inhabited by the thousands of Asher. The lot of Asher fulfilled in all essential respects the blessing of Jacob and Moses. "Out of Asher his bread shall be fat, and he shall yield royal dainties." "Let him dip his foot in oil. Under thy shoes shall be iron and brass; and as thy days, so shall thy strength be."[1] It is a splendid region, and still capable of high cultivation.

At present, however, much of it appears to be neglected; the villages are small, and the inhabitants seem poor and shiftless.

They are mostly Metâwileh; and for centuries this district has been under the oppressive rule of the Begs and sheikhs of Beit 'Aly es Sŭghîr, who reside principally at Tibnîn and Bint Jebeil. The Metâwileh are a peculiar people; they will neither eat nor drink with those of another faith, except the Moslems. They are polluted by the mere touch of a Christian, and will break any jar, dish, or cooking utensil which may have been accidentally used by one of that sect. I know by personal experience that it is very unpleasant, and sometimes exasperating, to live in a Mutawâly village.

They are, as you are aware, an heretical sect of Moslems, followers of the Imâm 'Ali, the son-in-law of Muhammed, like the Persians, whom they resemble in their religious faith, their customs, and personal appearance. Their ancestors probably emigrated to this region from the distant East, and they have perpetuated that distinctive Oriental type of countenance ever since by their exclusiveness and refusal to intermarry with any but their own people. They have, however, no records of that immigration, but maintain a religious connection with the Shîites of Persia, in opposition to the Sonnites, or orthodox Muhammedans.

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[1] Gen. xlix. 20; Deut. xxxiii. 24, 25.

In this country they are found chiefly in the mountains above Sidon and Tyre, and a few families reside in those cities. There are some villages occupied by them around the north end of Lebanon, in the Bŭkâ'a, and in Anti-Lebanon. They number in all about forty thousand, nor do they increase, as some other sects do in this country.

If the laws of Moses concerning things and persons unclean were intended to keep the Jews from mingling with the surrounding nations, nothing more effectual could have been devised for this purpose. The Metâwileh thus live separated, both in fact and feeling, from their neighbors, hating all, hated by all. Of course, they refuse to eat with all classes except Moslems. It was so with the Jews. Peter said to Cornelius, "Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation;" and it required a voice from heaven thrice repeated to convince him that he "should not call any man common or unclean."[1] Nor did his divine vision permanently cure him of this deeply-rooted feeling, for not long after it he separated himself, fearing to eat with Gentile converts at Antioch, and was led into a guilty dissimulation in consequence, which Paul openly and sternly rebuked.[2] We need not, therefore, be surprised at the strength of this custom amongst the Metâwileh.

From whom did they derive this law regarding things clean and unclean?

In its details it so closely resembles the Mosaic precepts, even to the breaking of earthen vessels which have become defiled, as to suggest the idea that they have borrowed it from the Jews. And this resemblance is in other things besides clean and unclean meats, drinks, apparel, and vessels for household use. The law which obliged persons affected with loathsome diseases to dwell without the camp is still observed by these people.[3] We spent the hot summer months of 1852 in the village of Jeba'a, above Sidon. The inhabitants were nearly all Metâwileh, and very fanatical. On a rocky hill south of the Castle a poor woman was thus separated, living in a booth of green branches. She was not allowed to leave her solitary shelter, and no one was permitted to visit her but the person who carried her daily allowance of food. There she passed many days and nights until released by death from her sufferings.

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[1] Acts x. 28.

[2] Gal. ii. 11–21.

[3] Levit. xiii. 46.

We remonstrated with the people against such barbarity, and the men consented to have her brought into a hired room, where we could provide suitable food and prescribe for her disease. But the women rose in furious clamor and rebellion against the proposal, and it had to be abandoned. Indeed, it was ascertained that the dying wretch herself would neither take the medicines nor taste our food. I was amazed at the barbarity of the women. They passed her by until she died; then, however, they assembled in troops, and screamed, and tossed their arms, and tore their hair, with boisterous lamentations.

There is a sad callousness in this people, a total absence of those traits of kindness and sympathy for the diseased and wretched which fill Christian countries with societies, committees, and hospitals, to aid, cure, and shelter them. Religion makes the difference; not that the Metâwileh are without religion, such as it is. While that tragedy was slowly enacting before our eyes the fast of Ramadân was kept in its utmost stringency. Though it was blazing midsummer, the people neither ate, drank, nor smoked for more than fourteen hours of fierce sunshine, and even children were forced to go through that long fast of twenty-seven days. There was public prayer, too—in fact, a sort of Mutawâly protracted meeting.

Even the women assembled daily at the fountains, performed their ablutions, and their genuflections and prostrations, beneath the noble walnut-trees which adorned the hill-sides of Jeba'â. Nowhere else have I seen women thus praying in public.

The Metâwileh, men and women, are a sallow, forlorn, and ill-conditioned generation, inferior to the Christians who dwell by their side. It is religion that makes the difference, even though the Christianity known here is little better than a caricature of the religion of Jesus. There is a remarkable resemblance between them and the Jews in this land. They have the Jewish contour and countenance, and even cultivate love-locks after the same fashion. And though they are afraid to associate with you, lest you contaminate and pollute them, they are so intolerably filthy in their habits and habitations that it is no great trial to avoid and be avoided by them.

We have now reached a point where our road leaves Wady el 'Ayûn and ascends the rough mountain towards the north-west to Yâtir, and from there to Kâna. I recall two incidents during a former ride through this wady. I saw a man lying by the roadside apparently dying from the bite of a serpent, but was informed that such fatal accidents were not common in this region. In another part of the valley I noticed a large swarm of bees that had settled upon a branch of a tree high up the perpendicular cliff that overhung the path. They seemed to have issued from a cleft in the rock, and to that extent illustrated the reference of Moses "to honey out of the rock," and the allusion to the same thing in the Psalms.[1] Wild honey is occasionally found in trees of the forest, as in the oak woods of Gilead and Bashan, but it must have been far more abundant in the time of John the Baptist.[2]

This low building on the hill-side which we have just passed, with arches in front, and its enclosure protected by a rubble wall and thorny hedge, is a sheepfold, or marâh. I am reminded by it that we are in the midst of a district which is now, and probably always has been, a favorite range for sheep and goats. The marâhs are generally built in a valley, or on the sunny side of a hill, where they are sheltered from the winter winds.

In ordinary weather the sheep and goats are gathered at night into the enclosed yard; but when the nights are cold and stormy the flocks are shut up in the marâh. The sharp thorn-bushes on the top of the wall that surrounds the yard are a defence which the prowling wolf will rarely attempt to scale. The nimr, however, and fahd—the leopard and panther of this country—when pressed with hunger, will sometimes overleap this thorny hedge, and with one bound land amongst the frightened fold. Then is the time to try the nerve and heart of the faithful shepherd. Those rough

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[1] Deut. xxxii. 13; Psa. lxxxi. 16.

[2] Matt. iii. 4.

EL MARÂH—THE SHEEPFOLD.

types of Him who leadeth Joseph like a flock never leave their helpless charge alone, but accompany them by day, and abide with them at night, sharing with them the sunshine and the storm.[1]

As spring advances, the shepherds move up to other marâhs and greener ranges; and in the hot months of summer they sleep with their flocks on the cool heights of the mountains, with no other protection than a stout palisade of tangled thorn-bushes. Nothing can be more primitive than this shepherd life far away amongst the sublime solitudes of goodly Lebanon, and there it can be studied to the best advantage in all its picturesque details.

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[1] Psa. lxxx. 1.

Seated upon some commanding pinnacle of the mountain, high above the sheepfold, watch the flocks returning to the marâh as evening lingers on the verge of night; listen to the call of the shepherd; the echoing sound of the bell around the leader's neck; see the black goats, now in bold relief on some overhanging cliff, now half-concealed amongst the bushes, now leaping from rock to rock, and all hurrying down towards the fold. The shepherd walks before, and they follow, while the dogs of the flock bring up the rear. Many of these Oriental shepherd-dogs are not, like those in other lands, the friend and companion of their masters, and fit to figure in poetry. That would not suit Job's disparaging comparison.[1] They are a mean, ill-conditioned generation, kept at a distance, kicked about, and half-starved, with nothing noble or attractive about them. Still, though they lag lazily behind the flocks, they render important aid to their masters by making a furious barking at any intruder amongst their charge, and thus give warning of approaching danger.

David, although a shepherd in his younger days, seems to have had but little respect for dogs, to judge from the way he refers to them in the fifty-ninth Psalm. In regard to his enemies, who "watched the house to kill him," by the command of Saul, he says: "At evening let them return; and let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city. Let them wander up and down for meat, and grudge if they be not satisfied."[2]

Those were city dogs, such as lie about the streets in Beirût, Damascus, Smyrna, Constantinople, and other Oriental towns, in such numbers as to render it difficult, and often dangerous, to pick one's way over and amongst them—a lean, mangy, and sinister brood. They have no owners, but, upon some principle known only to themselves, they combine into gangs, each of which assumes jurisdiction over a particular street, and they attack with the utmost ferocity all canine intruders into their territory. In those contests, and especially during the night, they keep up an incessant barking and howling such as rarely is heard in any European city. The imprecations of David upon his enemies derive their significance, therefore, from this reference to one of the most odious of Oriental annoyances.

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[1] Job xxx. 1.

[2] Psa. lix. title, 6, 14, 15.

I notice that some of the flock on the hill-side above us keep near the shepherd, and follow whithersoever he goes, while others stray about on either side, or loiter far behind; and he often turns and calls to them or throws a stone at them.

I never ride over these hills, and see such flocks, without being reminded of those beautiful allusions to pastoral life that abound in the Bible. Our Saviour says that the good shepherd, "when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice."[1] This is true to the letter. In the morning he leads them forth from the fold, and it is his business to find pasture for them. It is necessary, therefore, that they should be taught to follow, and not to stray away into the unfenced fields of wheat which lie so temptingly on either side. The shepherd calls from time to time to remind them of his presence. They know his voice, and follow on; but, if a stranger call, they stop, lift up their heads in alarm, and, if the call is repeated, they turn and "flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers." This is not the fanciful costume of a parable; it is simple fact. I have made the experiment often.

The shepherd goes before, to see that the way is practicable and safe. He is armed in order to defend his charge, and in that he is very courageous. Many adventures with wild beasts occur not unlike that recounted by David; and though there are now no lions here, wolves, leopards, and panthers still prowl about these wild wadys.[2] They not unfrequently attack the flock in the very presence of the shepherd. I have listened with interest to their descriptions of desperate fights with those savage beasts. And when the thief and the robber come, and come they do, the faithful shepherd has often to defend his flock at the hazard of his life.

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[1] John x. 4, 5.

[2] 1 Sam. xvii. 34–37.

No animals are more helpless than sheep that have strayed from the flock; they become utterly bewildered, for sheep are singularly destitute of the bump of locality; and this peculiarity seems to be implied in the confession and prayer of the Psalmist: "I have gone astray like a lost sheep: seek thy servant."[1] And so the shepherd in the parable leaves "the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray," for he well knows that the poor wanderer will never find the way back by any skill of its own.[2]

Isaiah has a beautiful reference to the Good Shepherd: "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd."[3] There must have been something specially significant in that act mentioned by the prophet.

In ordinary circumstances the shepherd does not feed his flock, except by leading and guiding them to where they may choose for themselves; but there are times when it is otherwise. Late in autumn, when the pastures are dried up, and in winter, in places covered with snow, he must furnish them food or they will die. In the oak woods along the eastern sides of Lebanon, between Ba'albek and the Cedars, there are then gathered numerous flocks, and the shepherds are all day long in the bushy trees, cutting down the branches, upon whose green leaves and tender twigs the sheep and goats are entirely supported. The same is true in all mountain districts, and large forests are preserved for that purpose. Life in those remote and wild woods is then singularly romantic. The ring of the axe, the crash of falling branches, the shout of the shepherds, the tinkling of bells and barking of dogs, wake a thousand echoes in the deep wadys of Lebanon. I have ridden for hours in the midst of those lively scenes, and the remembrance of them comes back vividly to my mind.

Micah, perhaps, had noticed the flocks feeding in the forests somewhat as you describe them along the slopes of Lebanon. He says: "Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitarily in the wood, in the midst of Carmel: let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old."[4]

No doubt the reference is to the same thing. Parts of Carmel, Bashan, and Gilead are now covered with such forests, which, at the proper season, are frequented by shepherds with large flocks, that live upon the green leaves and tender branches.

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[1] Psa. cxix. 176. [2] Matt. xviii. 12. [3] Isa. xl. 11. [4] Micah vii. 14.

How do you explain the expression, Feed with thy rod?

The word signifies to feed and to rule, and both ideas are natural. The shepherd invariably carries a staff or rod with him when he goes forth to feed his flock. It is often bent or hooked at one end, which gave rise to the shepherd's crook in the hand of the Christian bishop. With this staff he guides the flock to their green pastures, and defends them from their enemies. That staff is associated as inseparably with the shepherd as the goad is with the ploughman. David, in the fourth verse of the twenty-third Psalm, says, "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me"—in the way in which they are employed by the good shepherd.

Our blessed Lord appropriates to himself all the characteristic traits of the good shepherd, and others still more sacred and divine, as we read in the tenth chapter of John's Gospel.

Though the subject is deeply interesting, we need not enlarge upon the many points of resemblance between the Oriental shepherd and his occupation, and the person, the office, and the work of the Shepherd of souls, for they apply with almost equal truthfulness to every land and in every age.

Here is Kâna, extending down the eastern slope of the mountain. It is inhabited mostly by Greek Catholics; but there are a few Protestants also, who have a small church building on the south side of the village. There is no reason to question its identification with the Kanah on the northern border of Asher, mentioned in the list of cities assigned to that tribe.[1] In later times it is referred to by Eusebius and Jerome. The ancient town probably occupied the top of the ridge, a short distance farther west, and to that site we will proceed, as there is nothing to detain us in the village.

The fact that no traces of antiquity are seen about Kâna itself may be accounted for from the nature of the stone used for building purposes—a white marl, barely hard enough to be wrought, and which soon dissolves into soil when exposed to the sun and rain.

There is a ruin about a mile north of it, called Um el 'Awamîd, which was built of hard rock; and there are ancient remains of foundations, columns or pillars, oil-presses, cisterns, and door-posts, scattered over the face of the mountain. There, too, are some well-preserved specimens of very ancient architecture, almost Cyclopean, such as I have seen nowhere else in this country. The old name is lost, and the present one, mother of columns, has been given by the Arabs on account of the pillars which form so conspicuous a feature in the ruins. From the number of old oil-presses at that place, and others north and south, it is evident that those now barren hills were once clothed with olive-trees. And that is probable enough, for the chalky marl is the best of all soils for the olive. When thus cultivated, this part of Asher must have been exceedingly fruitful; and the promised blessing of "Moses, the man of God, Let Asher be blessed, and let him dip his foot in oil," would be fulfilled to the very letter.

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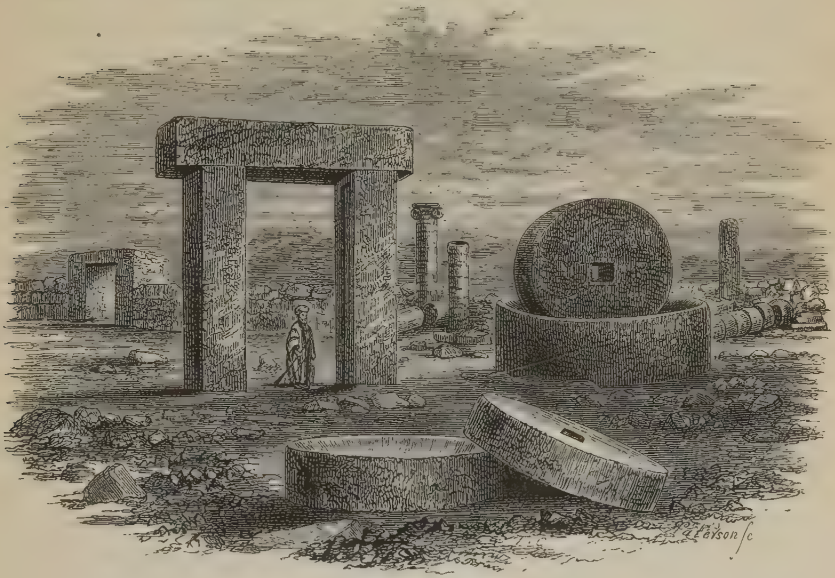
[1] Josh. xix. 28.



ANCIENT OIL-PRESSES.

The square posts, which evidently belonged to ancient oil-presses, stand in pairs, having a deep groove in the inner faces, running from top to bottom. In this groove moved the plank placed on the baskets containing the crushed olives. It was forced down by a beam, acting as a lever against the large stone which lies like a lintel on the top of the posts. There are stone troughs into which the oil ran, and large basins, in which the olives were ground to a pulp by the stone wheel that was rolled over them. The basins are nearly eight feet in diameter, and it must have cost no small labor to cut them out of the mountain and bring them to this spot. They are polished perfectly smooth by long use. Other basins, smaller and more concave, may have served to tread the olives with the feet—a process not now in use, but to which there is an allusion in Micah vi. 15: "Thou shalt tread the olives, but thou shalt not anoint thee with oil."

Mr. Renan discovered two Phœnician inscriptions at Um el 'Awamîd, which he renders into French, "en partie hypothétique," as he admits: "Au seigneur Baal des cieux. Vœu fait par Abdélim, fils de Mattan, fils de Abdélim, fils de Baal-schamar, dans le district de Laodicée. J'ai construit cette porte, et les battants qui sont à l'entrée de la *cella* de ma maison sépulcrale, l'an 280 du naître des rois, l'an 143 du peuple de Tyr, pour qu'ils me soient en souvenir et en bonne renommée, sous les pieds de mon seigneur Baal des cieux, pour l'éternité. Qu'il me bénisse."

The second is a brief inscription, "à Moloch-Astarté, dieu Hamman, vœu fait par Abdeschmoun, pour ses enfants." Baal, Moloch, and Ashtaroth, or Astarte, are often mentioned in the Bible; and the first and last are generally associated together as the special divinities of Tyre and Sidon. It is certainly most interesting to find these names graven in ancient Phœnician characters upon the rocks, amongst the ruins of Um el 'Awamîd, not three hours distant from the stronghold of that people, "the city Tyrus, the destroyed in the midst of the sea."[1]

There are some curious sculptures in the face of the rock on the south side of the ravine which descends westward from Kâna. They are figures of men, rudely carved in bass-relief when no great progress had been made in sculpture. Dr. Lortet says of them: "They present the appearance of a remote antiquity. The heads are, for the most part, in profile; but the eyes are represented on the face, as is the case with most archaic types. The dress consists of a simple tunic, crossed on the left side." They may be of any supposable age, and were probably cut by Phœnician artists before Tyre had any such masters as Hiram, who "was filled with wisdom, and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass," whom Solomon employed to beautify the Temple.[1]

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[1] Ezek. xxvii. 32.

We have now reached the top of the ridge west of Kâna, and in this vicinity was situated, as I suppose, that ancient city assigned to Asher. Rock-cut cisterns and sepulchres, and the marks of extensive quarrying, indicate the existence here of a Phœnician or Hebrew town of considerable size. Above the road, on our left, are the outlines of a wine-fat, one of the most complete and best-preserved in the country. Turn your horse out of the main road, and we will ride up to it. Here, as you see, is the upper basin, where the grapes were trodden and pressed. A narrow channel, cut in the rock, conveyed the juice into the lower basin, where it was allowed to settle; from there it was drawn off into a third and smaller basin. The wine-press itself has long since disappeared, but there is no mistaking the purpose for which those basins were excavated in the solid rock.[2]

From "the beginning" of the sacred record down to the close of "the Revelation of St. John the divine," wine-fats and wine-presses are alluded to in the Bible. A surprising change in this respect must have occurred in the country since those days, for we have scarcely seen any traces of the wine-fat during our rambles through the Holy Land, from Beersheba even unto Dan.

During the last twelve hundred years Palestine has been under the domination of fanatical Muhammedans; and as the use of wine is prohibited to them, the making of it was not allowed. Previous to the Moslem conquest the manufacture of wine was so common and familiar as to furnish the basis of many Biblical figures and symbols, some of which are most impressive. In the fourteenth chapter of Revelation we read that "the great winepress of the wrath of God was trodden without the city." From this and other allusions in the sacred records, it appears that wine-presses were located outside of the cities, generally in the vineyards themselves, and also that the grapes were trodden by the feet of men.

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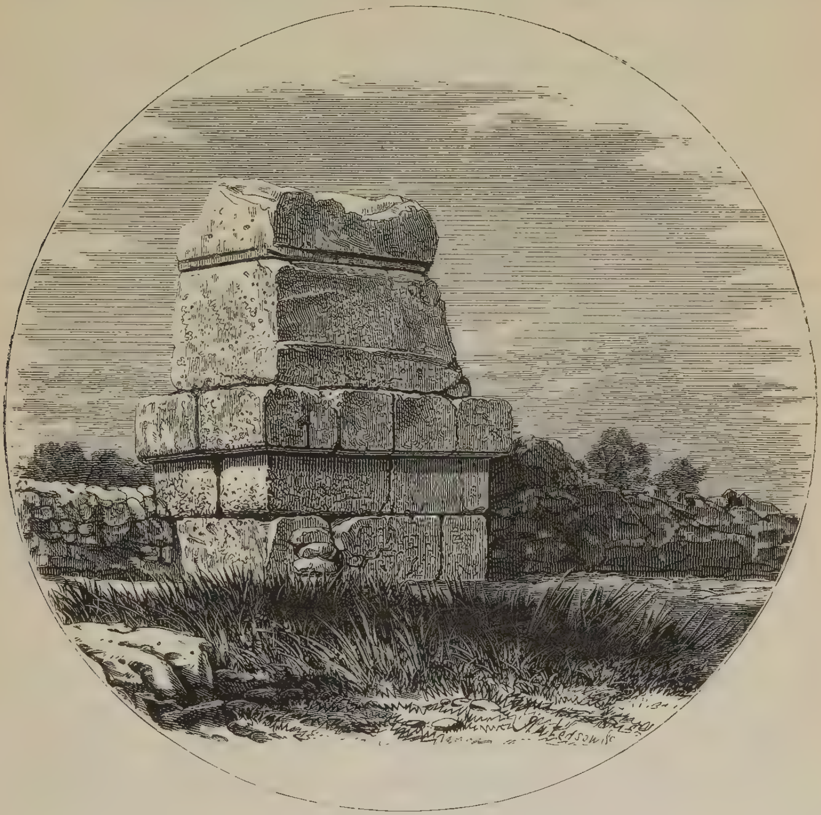
[1] 1 Kings vii. 13, 14.

[2] Isa. v. 1, 2.

In the nineteenth chapter of the same book the symbolic figure is greatly intensified: "He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." This awful imagery seems to have been derived from the sixty-third chapter of Isaiah, where the apparel of him "that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah," was red "like him that treadeth in the winefat." Nothing now seen in this country could have suggested such language. But when presses like those at Um el 'Awamîd were "full," or, like that at the site of old Kanah, "overflowed" with new wine, there must have been something in the appearance of the presses and of those who wrought in them eminently suggestive of slaughter and bloodshed.

But to change the subject. That village on our left is Hanâweih, and before us is one of the most striking monuments of ancient Tyre that the hand of time has spared. It is called Kabr Hairân — Tomb of Hiram. There is nothing in the monument itself inconsistent with the idea that it marks the final resting-place of that great Tyrian king, the renowned friend and ally of David and Solomon. It bears about it unmistakable marks of extreme antiquity. The base, or pedestal, consists of two tiers of great stones, each three feet thick, thirteen feet long, and eight feet eight inches broad. Above this is one huge stone, a little more than fourteen feet long, nearly ten feet broad, and three feet four inches thick. Over this is the sarcophagus, twelve feet three inches long, eight feet broad, and six feet high. The stone lid on the top of all is a little smaller every way, and slightly pyramidal in shape, and five feet thick. The entire height is about twenty-one feet. Mr. Renan discovered a rock chamber under the tomb, to which steps descend from the north end of the monument. There is nothing like it still remaining in its original position in this country, and it may well have stood as it now does ever since the days of Solomon.

These large broken sarcophagi scattered around it are assigned by tradition to Hiram's mother, wife, and family. Concerning them nothing need or can be said. This whole neighborhood abounds in Phœnician remains, and it is quite natural that it should be so. The situation is beautiful; sufficiently high and near enough to command the then glorious prospect of plain, city, and crowded harbor; and no doubt the country-seats and summer residences of Tyre's "merchant princes" crowned these hills. The village of Hanâweih and others in the neighborhood are built out of the ruins of such palaces, and similar remains lie scattered over all this region. Indeed, there is, perhaps, no part of Palestine, except the vicinity of Jerusalem, so thickly covered with ruins, rock tombs, curious sarcophagi, and other remains of antiquity, as are the hills facing the plain, the sea-shore, and the city of Tyre.



KABR HAIRÂN—TOMB OF HIRAM.

Instead of taking the direct road to the city, we will turn to the left and pass by the fountains of Ras el 'Aîn, and from there follow the beach for an hour to the gate of Tyre.

In March of 1861 a remarkable tessellated pavement, the floor of an ancient church, was discovered by Mr. Renan in that fig-orchard a short distance to the south-west of the tomb of Hiram. The following is the substance of Mr. Renan's elaborate description: "In loosening some débris situated about three hundred metres from the tomb [Hiram's] towards Tyre, one of the soldiers, whom I had detailed to that side, saw the base, hardly emerging from the soil, of a column, having on it a Greek cross. He scraped away the débris, and discovered the pavement of a small Byzantine church, which was entirely covered with a mosaic, miraculously preserved, which at first we were inclined to regard as more ancient than the church itself." Subsequently Mr. Renan appears to have abandoned this idea. "The pavement was found to be about forty-five feet long and thirty wide, and in admirable preservation, except where the roots of fig-trees had made a few small holes, and a small spot in the right aisle that had been injured by fire." It is truly wonderful, as Mr. Renan observes, that, "during at least twelve hundred years, no chance had revealed the existence of this beautiful pavement," and all the more wonderful since the stratum of soil that concealed it was not more than a foot thick.

The church was dedicated to St. Christopher, as a Greek inscription in the nave informs us. Mr. Renan assigns the date of that church "to the sixth century, about the reign of Justin II., known to have been a very brilliant era for Byzantine art."

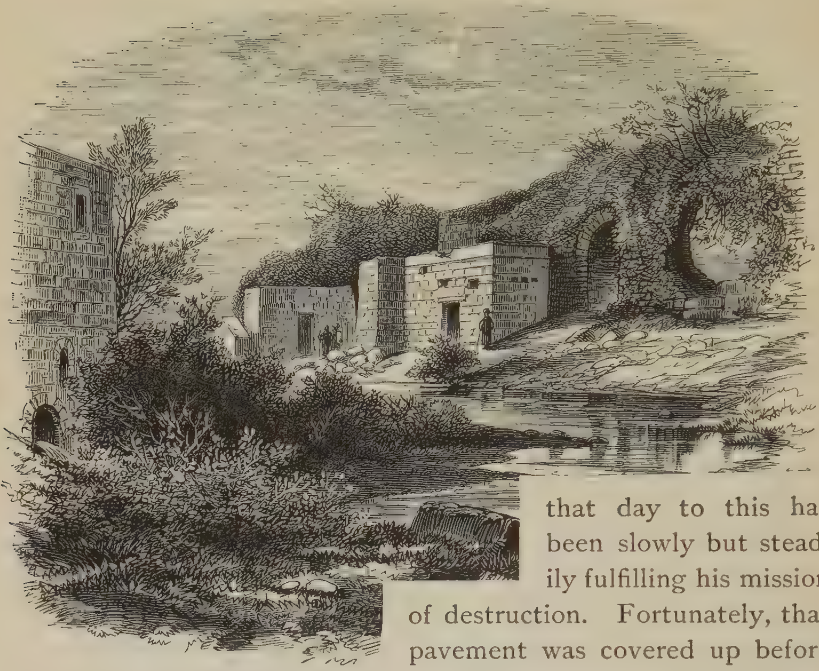
"This wonderful pavement was arranged in three main divisions: the central part, or nave, which contained the inscription, and two side aisles. The nave is broad, and shorter than the aisles; and opposite to the entrance of the edifice is a rich scroll, like a carpet, of most intricate pattern, having thirty-one circular medallions interlaced by the tendrils of vines, ornamented with leaves and flowers, which spring from vases set in the four corners of this complicated scroll. These medallions contain representations of fantastic subjects, combats of animals, rustic scenes, games of children, and scenes from rural life. The two side aisles contain seventy-four medallions, representing, by appropriate busts, the twelve months of the year, the four seasons, the four winds, and twenty-seven double groups of fish, animals, fowls, and flowers. The aisles are separated from the nave by columns, four in each row, and the spaces between the columns were occupied by eight panels, containing various animals chasing other animals. The execution of the great central scroll is admirable, and the attitudes of the animals perfectly true to life." The arrangement of those panels, Mr. Renan says, should be—beginning at the bottom on the right side — first, a lion in chase of a bull; second, a tiger pursuing a horse; third, a hound after a hare; fourth, a lion chasing a boar. On the left side there is, first, a hound pursuing a hare; second, a leopard in chase of a bull; third, a bear pursuing a horse; and, fourth, a lion chasing a deer.

"Of the seventy-four medallions, the first couple, at the top of the left aisle, are sheep, and the second fish; and the same couples are at the bottom. Then follow, from the top, fowls, goats, fish, leopards; then the months, seasons, and winds, represented by human figures, with Greek inscriptions to each; then couples as above —leopards, fish, goats, and fowls. The medallions in the right aisle are arranged in much the same order; but, in addition to fish and sheep, there are couples of flowers, elephants, birds, and fruits.

"All these figures and groups were admirably executed with small cubes of various colored stone, presenting a splendid tessellated pavement, wholly unique, and without a rival among the ancient remains of like character in this country." I visited the site myself, but too late to see this floor *in situ*. Mr. Renan had, with the aid of an expert in such work, detached the entire pavement, and sent it to Paris, where, I trust, if it has escaped the conflagrations of the Commune, it may long be preserved in safety for the inspection of the curious in such matters. I could only measure the denuded surface, and study on the spot a rough copy of the original, made before the pavement was taken away.

One would like to know something more about St. Christopher, and his connection with this region in those early Christian times. Did he live here, and work miracles entitling him to canonization on these beautiful hills of Tyre?

It is evident from the inscription that this place and this neighborhood were then thickly inhabited and very flourishing. But alas! the Muhammedan came, in the seventh century, and from



RÂS EL 'AIN.

that day to this has been slowly but steadily fulfilling his mission of destruction. Fortunately, that pavement was covered up before those fanatics saw it, or it would not have remained intact until it was discovered in this nineteenth century.

How gradually the green hills descend westward to the plain! and it is truly refreshing to breathe again the cool sea-breeze. The extensive cultivation of tobacco in the fields along our route would seem to indicate that we are approaching the influences of civilization once more.

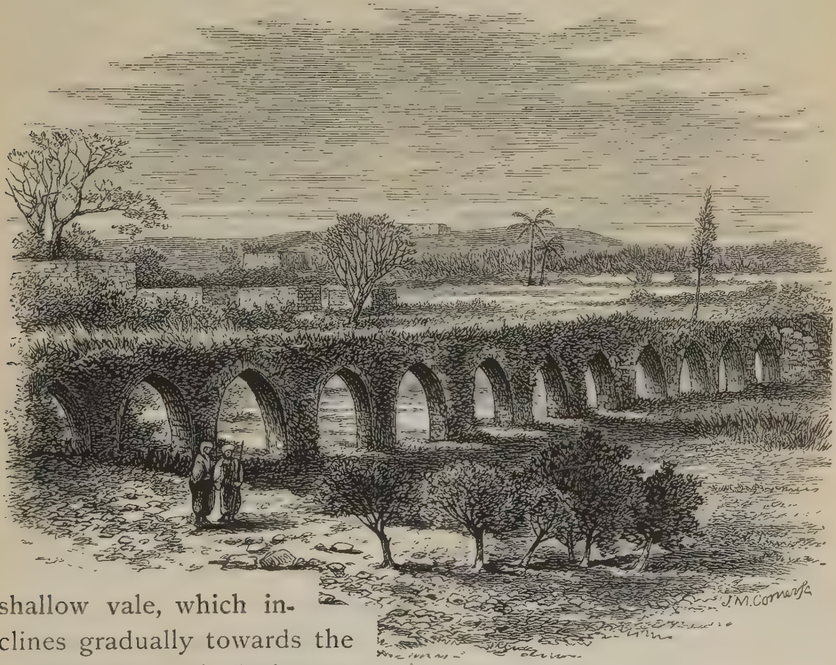
Almost the whole crop raised in Belâd Beshârah is taken to Tyre, and exported thence to Egypt. The tobacco is of an inferior quality, but it forms one of the main industries for the people of this entire district.

The special charm to me in the view before us is that this pretty plain, the coast, and the bright blue sea beyond it, belong to Tyre, the chief city of Phœnicia, and the centre for ages of the commerce of the world.

Here we pass under the arches of the aqueduct at Râs el 'Ain, and soon you will see the most surprising outbursts of water to be found even in this land "of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills," as Moses describes it.[1]

These pools, or reservoirs, are indeed extraordinary structures, and appear to be as ancient as the Pools of Solomon, in which case they may have been built by Hiram himself.

However that may be, ancient Tyre was probably supplied with water from these fountains by aqueducts carried across the plain to the city. At present there are four reservoirs, situated in the plain about a quarter of an hour from the sea-shore, and distant one hour from Tyre. The fountains rise from the bottom of this shallow vale, which inclines gradually towards the sea; and the geological cause of their appearance on the surface I suppose to be the obtrusion at this place of a thick formation of that unstratified sandstone which abounds all along this coast. The water, descending from the eastern mountains, is here arrested by that formation, and is compelled to rise to the surface to find a passage to the sea.



AQUEDUCT AT RÂS EL 'AIN.

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[1] Deut. viii. 7.

The reservoirs were built from fifteen to twenty feet high around the separate fountains, to elevate the water sufficiently to irrigate the plain, and they might be raised still higher, if there was any occasion to do so. The two on the east are not so large as the one below, and the water of both is not equal to the stream from that one alone. That is the most seaward, and is octagonal in shape, about eighty feet in diameter and twenty deep. The water flowing out of it is now of no further use than to drive those mills attached to its walls, after which it runs down to the sea.

The upper reservoir, or that one farthest east of the three, is fifty-two feet by forty-seven, and twelve feet deep; the other, fifty-two by thirty-six, and sixteen feet deep; and the canal connecting them is forty-three feet long. The walls of the second vary in thickness from twenty-three to twelve feet, but much of the heavy casing-stone has been carried away. Still, it will stand for a thousand years to come, if not purposely destroyed. From the upper reservoir the water is let into an aqueduct with pointed arches which crosses the wady southward. The fourth reservoir is not a very ancient work, and seems more modern than the others. It is the smallest, and had an aqueduct of its own, which also carried the water southward for the purpose of irrigation. The water is impregnated with lime, and has formed large stalactites, which in some places have filled up the arches of the aqueduct.

The ancient aqueduct started from the largest reservoir, and was carried eastward to the other two, and then over the plain in a northerly direction to Tell el Ma'shûk, where the massive ruins with round arches plainly indicate its Roman origin. The top of the aqueduct was from ten to fifteen feet above the ground, and the watercourse was about three feet deep and four feet wide.

There are two low reservoirs at Tell Habeish, which we have just passed on our right; the water from them is used to irrigate several mulberry-gardens, the property of Rashîd Pasha, and named after him er Rashîdîyeh. The setting sun admonishes us to hasten along the beach towards Tyre. We shall find our tents pitched in an open space near the sea-shore west of the city. There I have often encamped on former visits, and have found it safe, and far pleasanter than any private or public house in the town.

XVI.

TYRE AND SIDON.

The Emporium of Phœnicia.—The Phœnicians.—The Great-grandsons of Noah.—The Sidonians.—The Giblites.—The Arkites.—The Zemarites.—The Arvadites.—The Sinites.—Jebeleh, Gabala.—Sea-board of Phœnicia.—The Phœnicians and the Hebrews.—Enterprise of the Phœnicians.—Their Colonies.—Interior Harbor of Tyre.—The Roadstead.—Personal Incident.—The Egyptian Harbor.—Lieutenant Kitchner's Description of the Cathedral at Tyre.—Consecration Speech of Eusebius.—Dr. Robinson's Topography of Insular Tyre.—Alexander's Causeway.—Ancient Stone in the Sea-wall.—Columns strewn beneath the Waves.—Remains of Ancient Tyre.—Its Water-supply.—Dip of the Rock Strata.—Tyrian Purple.—Founding of Tyre.—Palætyrus.—Biblical History of Tyre.—The Commerce of Tyre described by Ezekiel.—Tyre besieged by Nebuchadnezzar.—Tyrians dwelt in Jerusalem.—Tyre taken by Alexander the Great.—Tyre in the Time of Christ.—The Apostle Paul at Tyre.—Herod the King.—Tyre a Heap of Ruins.—The Burden of Prophecy.—Modern Tyre.—The Ancient Wall of Tyre.—Substructions built by Hiram described by Mr. Kenrick.—The Channel in the Time of William of Tyre.—Ruined Aqueduct.—Khân and Bridge at el Kâsimîyeh.—The Lîtâny.—The Delta.—Coast of Tyre and Sidon.—Joshua, the Son of Nun.—Abu el Aswâd.—Cloud-burst.—Mr. Holland's Experience in Wady Feirân.—Biblical References to Cloud-bursts.—Orinthonopolis.—Rock-cut Tombs at 'Adlan.—St. George.—Ancient Remains.—Sarepta.—Guest-chamber.—The Widow of Sarepta and the Syro-Phœnician Woman.—Ruins of Sarepta.—'Ain el Kanterah.—Tell el Bûrak.—Ez Zaherâny.—Neb'a et Tâsy.—Aqueduct of Sit Zebeideh.—Nahr es Senîk.—El Muntarah.—Roman Mile-stone.—Gardens of Sidon.—Sidon from the South.—Personal Reminiscences.—Neby Kabarûh.—Coins of Philip and Alexander.—Search for Hid Treasure.—Mughârat Tublûn.—Sarcophagus of Ashmanezer.—Phœnician Inscription.—Gods of the Sidonians.—"Corn-lands at the Root of Dan."—The Duc de Luynes.—Phœnician and Hebrew Alphabet.—The Inner Harbor of Sidon.—Sea Castle.—The Old Wall.—Castle of St. Louis.—Broken Murex.—Neby Sidûn.—Ancient Remains in the Gardens of Sidon.—History of Sidon.—Sidon and Tyre.—Sidon mentioned in the Homeric Poems.—Destruction of Sidon.—The Apostle Paul in Sidon.—Sidon during the Crusades.—Emîr Fakhr ed Dîn.—French Merchants.—Population of Sidon.—The Land and the Book.

May 24th. Evening.

As we were quietly riding along the beach from Râs el 'Ain this evening, I tried in vain to realize that it was the sea-shore of Tyre, the far-famed city; the "joyous city, whose antiquity is of ancient days; the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth."[1]

To restore the historic renown of Phœnicia's magnificent emporium; to rebuild its splendid palaces out of the rubbish of this dilapidated and squalid town; to repeople its thoroughfares of trade and traffic with merchant-princes; and to cover this lonely sea, and crowd this silent harbor, with the fleets of all nations, would be a feat more of fancy than of fact. The burden of prophecy has fallen with crushing weight upon Tyre, the wonder and boast of the ancient world, and all that was here of pomp and splendor. "The Lord of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth."[2] Still, we shall find much to interest us amongst the ruins of Old Tyre—much, also, that is eminently Biblical, to which we may direct our thoughts during the quiet hours of the morrow.

Who were the Phœnicians, and what was the extent of their possessions?

These questions may very naturally be considered together, and concerning both different and contradictory opinions have been maintained. According to the ethnology of Moses, given in the tenth chapter of Genesis, the entire coast "from Sidon to Gaza" was the border of the Canaanites, the descendants of the eleven sons of Canaan, the grandson of Noah. Josephus repeats the Mosaic record without question or material change; and as our purpose is to illustrate the Bible, we will confine ourselves in the first place to the ancient, or Biblical, Phœnicia. Phœnicia and Phœnician were foreign names, probably derived from the palm-tree, and applied to this region and people by the Greeks. The Hebrew names were Canaan and Canaanites, so called from Canaan, the original progenitor. Nor does this exclude the inference that the word Canaan meant lowland, or plain, in distinction to highland, or mountainous; for most of the eleven families of Canaanites actually settled along the sea-coast or on the plains east of it.

Can the regions occupied by them be identified?

In almost every case, and the original names are still known. The Bible says, "And afterward were the families of the Canaanites [the great-grandsons of Noah] spread abroad." I will give you a general account of the territory of those families extending along the sea-board from the promontory of Carmel to Mount Casius, omitting, for the sake of brevity, the territory of those that occupied the south of Palestine.

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[1] Isa. xxiii. 7, 8.

[2] Isa. xxiii. 9.

Commencing at the northern base of Carmel, where the river Kishon empties into the Bay of Acre, the average width of the plain to the eastern hills is about five miles. The plain of Acre stretches for twenty miles northward to the rocky ridge of the Ladder of Tyre, which is pushed out two miles into the sea, and is about eight miles across to where the plain of Tyre begins. The Tyrian plain is two miles wide and eight long to the mouth of the Lîtâny. North of that river is an irregular region which extends to Sarepta, where it is cut off by the hills of the eastern mountains. From there the plain of Sidon begins and reaches to Nahr el Auwaly, the Bostrenus, two miles north of that city. In some parts it is two miles wide. The rocky spurs of Lebanon there come down to the shore and jut out into the sea, except at the débouchure of the river Dâmûr, the ancient Tamyras, and from thence to the plain of Beirût. Originally "the family" of Sidon, residing in the city of that name, extended their territory as far as Carmel on the south and the Tamyras on the north.

Proceeding northward, the plain of Beirût, with its magnificent olive groves, mulberry-gardens, and palm-trees, is about six miles wide from the Râs, or cape, to the base of Lebanon. Eight miles north of that city is the Dog River, the Lycus of classic geography, with its well-known pass, where, on the cliffs above the rock-cut roadway, are seen Assyrian, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman tablets or monuments and inscriptions. For about ten miles farther the coast is a waste of rugged rocks, with little if any plain, to Nahr Ibrahim, the ancient Adonis, two hours south of Jebeil, the ancient Gebal, or Byblus, celebrated in Grecian mythology for the myth of Venus and Adonis. Mourning for Adonis is supposed to be identical with "the weeping for Tammuz" referred to in Ezekiel viii. 14. For the next ten miles along the coast the region is rough and rocky, except for a limited space about Batrûn, the ancient Botrys. Beyond that town, the lofty Râs esh Shŭkah, the

Theo-prosopon, or face of God, cuts off all passage along the shore. North of that promontory is an upland olive-growing region, with very little plain until the district south of Tripoli is reached. There the plain is several miles wide from the point near the Mina to the débouchure of Nahr el Ḳadîsha, which comes down from the Cedars, and the loftiest summit of Lebanon.

Between the river Tamyras and the city of Tripoli there were colonies at Berytus, Byblus, and Botrys; but they probably all belonged to the Giblites, mentioned in Joshua xiii. 5, and referred to afterwards in 1 Kings v. 18, as "the stone-squarers." Tripoli itself, however, was settled by the Sidonians, Tyrians, and Arvadites.

The great plain of 'Akkâr, north of Tripoli, extends far inland, and is very fertile. It is watered by copious rivers, such as Nahr el Kebîr, the Eleutherus; Fauwâr ed Deir, the Sabbatical river; and several others which flow down from the north end of Lebanon, and from the range of the Nusairîyeh Mountains which bound that region on the east. About ten miles north of Tripoli, and half that distance from the sea-shore, on the eastern border of the plain, is the village and tell of 'Arka, where are the remains of a city and its acropolis, the presumable seat of another Canaanitish "family," the Arkites.

From Tell el 'Arka northward the plain stretches round the bay, or Jûn Akkâr, as far as Tartûs, the Antaradus of the Greeks, and the Tortosa of the Middle Ages. About twelve miles southeast of Tartûs, and two miles north of Nahr el Kebîr, the Eleutherus, is the village of Sŭmra, the ancient Simyra. In that region "the family" of the Zemarites may have been located. The island of Ruwâd is a little more than two miles from the shore to the south of Tartûs. On that small island are Phœnician remains; there "the family" of the Arvadites are supposed to have settled. North of Tartûs for several miles there is very little available land along the shore until the castle of Markab is passed. North of that for about fifteen miles is a fertile and well-watered region, through the middle of which Nahr es Sîn passes down and empties into the sea. There, probably, was the home of the Sinite "family." Six miles north of the extensive ruins called Beldeh, the Platos of Strabo, at the mouth of the river Sîn, is the village of Jebeleh, the ancient Gabala, probably originally founded by the Phœnicians. From Jebeleh to el Ladikîyeh is about eighteen miles; and, after crossing the fine upland plains about that city, the southern foothills of Mount Casius, now called Jebel el Akr'a, are reached in about seven hours.

Thus ends a rapid survey of the sea-board of Phœnicia in its longest extent, where dwelt some of the families of the sons of Canaan, the great-grandsons of Noah.[1] Everywhere on the east it was hemmed in by mountain-ranges, first by the hills of Galilee, then by the rocky ridges of Lebanon, and north of them by the inaccessible ramparts of the Nusairîyeh Mountains. How far into those mountains the Phœnicians may have extended their possessions is not known, but certainly not very far; and thus it is evident that their territory was quite contracted, and a large part of it rocky and unproductive.

Some are disposed to limit the territory of Phœnicia proper to the coast of Tyre and Sidon; that is, from the Ladder of Tyre to the Auwaly, the river Bostrenus, two miles north of Sidon—a length of thirty miles. But if the Phœnicians controlled the entire sea-board from the promontory of Carmel to Mount Casius, nearly five times longer, and which, in their greatest prosperity, they probably possessed, still, it is obvious that the extent and peculiar nature of their territory bear no proportion to the wealth and influence possessed and exerted by them. They were in some respects the most remarkable people that ever existed. Coming with the dawn of history, they led the van of nations in commerce, manufacture, and art for twenty-five centuries.

Some of the characteristic traits by which the Phœnicians were able to play so conspicuous a part amongst the nations of the earth can be clearly brought out by contrasting that people with the Hebrews, their immediate neighbors. Aside from their venerable historic traditions, their religious institutions, and their sacred associations, the Hebrews of Palestine exerted no influence upon the general development and progress of the human race. They contributed almost nothing to the commerce, the manufactures, or the arts of the world. The Phœnicians, on the contrary, from the very beginning of their settlement on this coast, engaged with the utmost eagerness and activity in all those pursuits, and that naturally inclined them to cultivate friendly intercourse with other nations. They made long journeys by land, and attracted to their borders the trading caravans of the interior.

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[1] Gen. x. 1, 6, 15–18.

They excelled all others in ship-building and navigation, and made distant voyages westward amongst the islands of the Mediterranean, and even passed through the Strait of Gibraltar into the Atlantic, in search of tin from Britain and amber from the Baltic. They sailed through the Red Sea to Arabia and India, and brought back the spices, gems, and costly fabrics of the far East. They became wealthy, and lived luxuriously. They planted colonies, not only in the islands of the Mediterranean, but also upon the main-land, in Asia Minor, Greece, Italy, Spain, and Northern Africa. They taught the barbarous races with whom they traded many of the useful arts; and, greatest of all bestowments, they carried to Europe and elsewhere the knowledge of alphabetic writing. In a general sense they contributed largely to the civilization of the human race. But we have had a long and fatiguing ride today, and may leave such topics for the morrow, which we expect to spend amongst the ruins of Phœnicia's great emporium.

Sunday, May 25th.

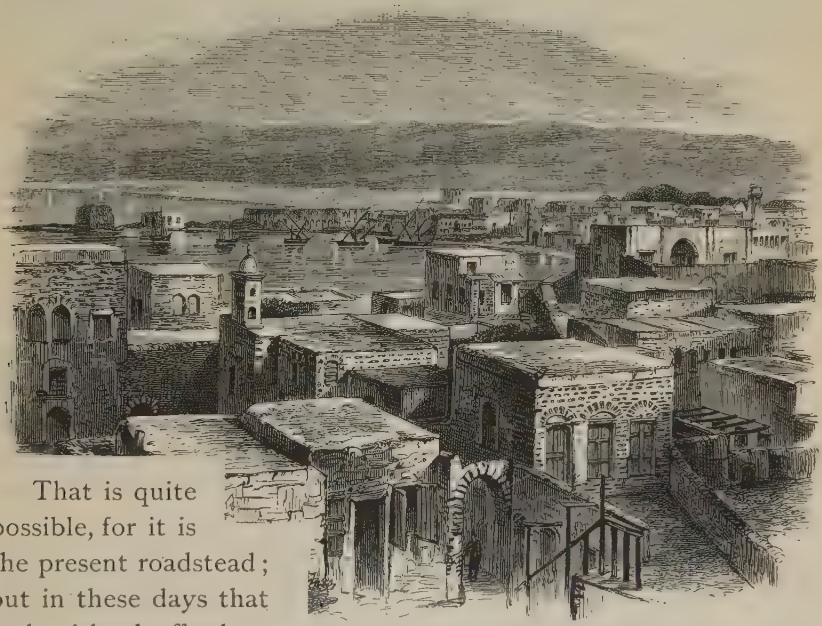
I took a solitary ramble this morning quite around the limitations of insular Tyre.

Not a very arduous achievement certainly, for the entire area is less than a mile square.

I strolled about *ad libitum*, indulging in my own reflections without interference. Under such conditions, no matter how familiar to others the scene may be, one enjoys something of the excitement of original exploration. Though thousands may have examined the ragged rocks at the south-west corner of the former island, yet to me they were just as suggestive as though no modern traveller had ever seen them before. And so it was with many other sights which attracted my notice. Re-entering the city by the eastern gate, I went to examine the interior harbor, and was surprised to find it so small, and so shallow that only ordinary coasting-boats could enter it.

It is all that remains of the northern, or Sidonian, harbor of ancient Tyre. Formerly it was protected by a wall, which commenced at the northern end of the island, near the present castle, and was carried round to the shore. Now the eastern wall of that inner harbor is mostly founded upon broken columns from the ruins of Tyre's public buildings, and therefore in its present form it is comparatively modern.

I suppose there must have been an anchorage for ships behind the low ledge of rocks towards the north, and some distance from the shore?



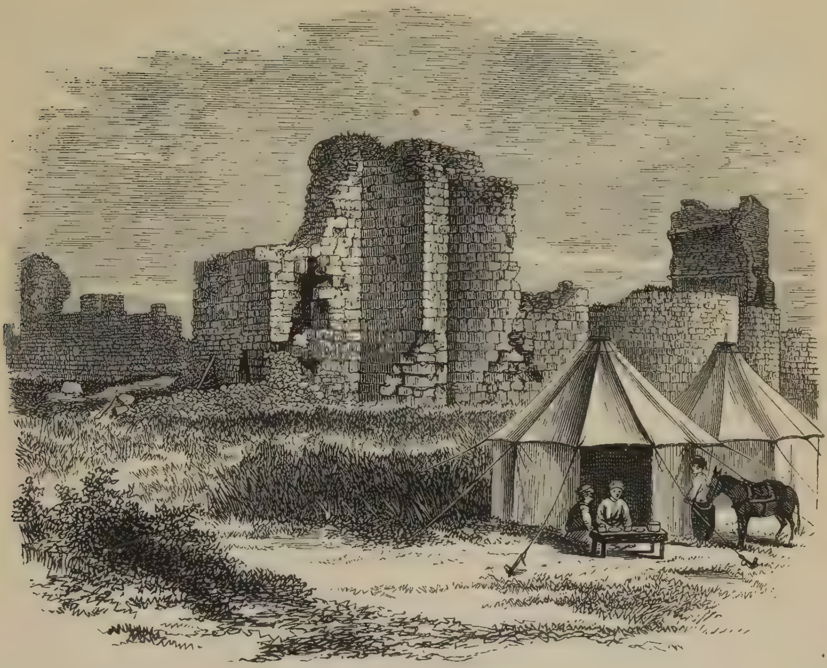
MINAT SÛR—INTERIOR HARBOR.

That is quite possible, for it is the present roadstead; but in these days that rocky island affords a very uneasy and unsafe refuge from the storms of winter or spring. I once chartered a small Italian brig to take me from Beirût to Jaffa, and when we arrived opposite Tyre a strong south-west wind rose up against us. The captain ran his vessel between that ledge and the shore, and there anchored; and there we lay, rolling and pitching in a most aggravating manner, for eleven days. The only mitigation of our misery was in going on shore whenever a boat could venture out to us. It would not be difficult, however, to connect that reef with the north-western corner of the island, and thus form a commodious and safe harbor. Something of that kind may yet be done in the good time coming for this country.

The principal anchorage for shipping may have been on the north of the island, and between it and the main-land, before the construction of the causeway. Ancient authors mention a harbor on the south of the island, called the Egyptian harbor; but all traces of a former anchorage have been obliterated by the sand. The sea on that side is very shallow, and so exposed to the south and west winds that even native boats are rarely seen there in modern times. After breakfast we may well devote the morning to the ruins of a city so celebrated in general history, and especially by the poets and prophets of the Bible.

Not to repeat the circuit of the island, which you have already made, let us go direct to the remains of Tyre's celebrated cathedral. Lieutenant Kitchner gives this description of it: "The cathedral occupies the south-east corner of the modern wall of Tyre. It is now in ruins; only the eastern portion with the three apses remains. The northern one of these is the most perfect. The masonry is small, of soft stone, fixed in strong cement, and having some mason's marks. The inside dimensions of the church were two hundred and fourteen feet long by eighty-two feet wide; the central apse has a diameter of thirty-six feet. The transepts project fifteen feet, and have side chapels in them, with small apses made in the thickness of the wall.

"In the interior are magnificent monolithic columns of red granite, measuring twenty-seven feet long. They were probably taken from some ancient temple, and show the form of double column peculiar to synagogues. The rest of the interior decorations appears to have been of white marble. The windows of the apses are ornamented on the outside by zigzag tracery. The cathedral, according to M. de Vogüé, was Crusading, dating from the latter half of the twelfth century. It probably occupies the site of the church built by Paulinus, and consecrated by Eusebius 323 A.D., in which the bones of Origen and the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa were buried. Some excavations were attempted in 1874 to find these tombs, but without success."



RUINS OF THE CATHEDRAL.

The top of one of the ruined buttresses of the cathedral commands the best general view of the island, the isthmus which connects it with the main-land, the sea-coast, and the adjacent country, that can be obtained.

It must indeed have been a noble edifice. Is there any reason to doubt that these ruins occupy the site of that grand basilica built by Paulinus, Bishop of Tyre, in the fourth century, and so pompously described by Eusebius in his speech at the consecration of the edifice?

That whole speech of Eusebius is well worth a careful study, not so much for its inflated oratory as for the light which it throws on the style of ecclesiastical architecture at that period. "It appears to be superfluous," he says, "to describe the dimensions, length, and breadth of the edifice, the grandeur that surpasses description, and the dazzling aspect of works glittering in the face of the speaker, the heights rising to the heavens," etc.

By "the dimensions" I understand him to include that "wider space, the outer enclosure, strengthened with a wall to compass the edifice, that it might be a most secure bulwark to the whole work." The entrance was, of course, from the west, and into "a large and lofty vestibule." Passing through this, the worshipper found himself in a "quadrangular space, having four inclined porticos, supported and adorned with pillars on every side;" and there stood those noble rose-granite columns, some of which now lie half-buried beneath the ruins at the west end. I suppose others would appear if the modern hovels, and hills of rubbish which now choke up the whole area, were cleared away. We need not follow Eusebius through all the intricacies of an ancient cathedral, but may commend the oration to the study of the curious about such matters.

From our stand-point upon this buttress we are able to study the entire topography of the island and its neighborhood.

The best description of it I have seen is that given by Dr. Robinson, but "the western coast of the island" is not "wholly a ledge of ragged, picturesque rocks;" there are a few such, however, at the south-west end. This was "not originally a long, narrow island." It was scarcely a mile in length, and not much less in breadth. The land does not project to the south of the isthmus, but it does to the north and north-west. The isthmus does not lie "between the shore and the more northern part of the island." It would not have reflected much credit upon the sagacity of Alexander's engineers to have carried the causeway in that direction, because the strait is broader and the sea deeper there than towards the middle and the southern end. Alexander would doubtless have built his causeway where there was the least depth and shortest distance. That part of the island which extended farthest towards the main-land lies nearly three hundred paces directly east of the fountain, as appears from the remains of Tyre's ancient wall at that place. From there the island fell back rapidly towards the north-west, and more gradually towards the south-west. I suppose that Alexander's work first touched that projecting point. The largest part of the causeway, however, lies to the south of it, and the wind from that direction has there thrown up the greatest amount of sand. Those very interesting remains of the old wall were uncovered by quarriers while I was here many years ago; but, as the stones were too heavy for their purpose, they left them, and they are now buried again by the shifting sand.

There still exists one solitary specimen of Tyre's great sea-wall, that mighty bulwark which no enemy could overthrow. At the extreme northern end of the island a stone, nearly seventeen feet long and six and a half thick, rests probably where Tyrian architects placed it thousands of years ago. As in every case that I have examined, the foundation laid for such large blocks was made with stones comparatively small. When the sea is calm that portion of the old wall can easily be visited.

The number of granite columns that lie in the sea, particularly on the north of the island, is surprising. Not only is the east wall of the inner harbor founded upon them, but they lie strewed beneath the waves of the sea on every side. I have repeatedly rowed around the island when the surface was perfectly calm to look at them, and always with astonishment.

The land along the western shore, and the southern half of the island, with the exception of the Moslem cemetery, is given up to cultivation and pasturage; and there are found the remains of those grand edifices for which Tyre was celebrated. Some years ago, the quarriers who were digging out stone for the government barracks at Beirût uncovered a large floor a few feet below the surface. Breaking it up, and descending through rubbish some ten feet farther, they came upon a marble pavement, and a confused mass of columns of every size and variety. I went down and groped about amidst those prostrate columns, and found the bases of some still in their original positions—parts of what, perhaps, was once a temple. One fragment of verd-antique was very beautiful. In an adjoining excavation was found a marble statue of a female, life-size, robed, and in good preservation.

May not that have been the site and those the remains of the famous temple of Belus, or of Jupiter Olympus, both mentioned by Dius; or of Astarte or Hercules, described by Menander? It was in the centre and highest part of the island, and must have been very conspicuous from the sea.

The revolutions and desolations which such excavations reveal are quite bewildering. The floor above those remains was of the same kind as those now made in Tyre, but the house to which it belonged had wholly disappeared, and must have been destroyed before the city of the Middle Ages was built; and yet those ruins were then buried so deep below the surface that the builder of that house had not the slightest idea of their existence. That group of columns and the marble floor was again covered up by the quarriers in their search for available building-stones, and the unconscious tourist now walks heedlessly over the remains of that ancient splendor which astonished and delighted even the well-travelled "Father of History" four centuries before the birth of Christ. The southern half of the island is buried deep beneath such ruins, and I hope the day is not distant when others will explore them besides speculative quarriers, rummaging for large stones at so many piastres per hundred.

Should any one ask, Where are the stones of ancient Tyre—where, at least, the remains of those lofty towers and triple walls which excited the wonder and admiration of the Crusaders about seven centuries ago?—the preceding incidents will furnish a satisfactory reply. They are found in this depth of débris, spread over the island, and over the causeway of Alexander. They are found in her choked-up harbor and at the bottom of her sea. They are at Jaffa, and Acre, and Beirût, and in the rubbish of all those cities. In fact, the only wonder is that so much still remains to reveal and confirm the ancient greatness of this Phœnician capital.

On our way back to the tents we will pass around to the east of the town, to the fountain, or, rather, well, which supplies the inhabitants with water, and which has excited the speculation of some travellers as to its original source.

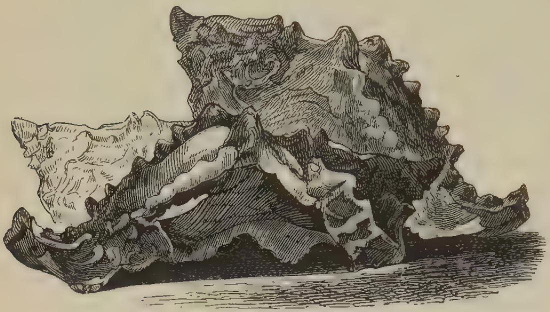
Do you suppose that this water comes from the fountains at Râs el 'Ain?

There is no need of such an hypothesis to explain any apparent mystery about this fountain. The period of Tyre's greatest extent and glory was before Alexander's causeway was made; and it is not probable that an aqueduct was carried under the sea from the shore to the island, which was then the only conceivable way of establishing a connection between the two, and that it has remained there unbroken to the present day. Besides, this fountain is not on the edge of the island nearest to the main-land, as it would have been had such an aqueduct been constructed, but three hundred paces farther west, in the interior of the original island. The strata along the Phœnician coast dip towards the sea and pass under it. Where they terminate abruptly at the shore, streams of water run out on a level with the surface and below it, and some of them are very large. A little north of the island of Ruwâd—the Arvad of the Bible—a fountain bursts up from the bottom of the sea of such size and power during the rainy months as to make the surface boil like a caldron.

The strata of the plain opposite this city dip under the sea at a small angle, and pass below the island. A shaft sunk to the necessary depth will reach the water running beneath that stratum and passing under the island. Cut off such a stream by a well, and the water will rise as high as the conditions of the strata on the neighboring plain will admit. The people will tell you that water can be found on any part of the island by digging to the proper depth. It will generally be somewhat brackish, and this is to be expected from the close proximity to the sea. These facts explain, as I believe, how it was that the Tyrians sustained such protracted sieges as they repeatedly did. They were not straitened for water because of the supply on their little island which the besiegers could not cut off.

Have you ever seen on this shore the shell-fish from which the far-famed Tyrian purple was obtained?

That dye was procured from a variety of the Murex found all along this coast, but it abounds most around the Bay of Acre. So, also, the Helix ianthina, from which a blue, with a delicate purple or lilac shade, was extracted, is equally abundant. After a storm in winter thousands of them may be gathered along the sandy beach, but they are so extremely fragile that the waves soon grind them to dust. A species of Buccinum is found here at Tyre, which contains a dark crimson coloring matter, with a bluish tinge. According to ancient authors, that was used to vary the shades of the purple. Pliny says the Tyrians ground the shell in mills to procure the dye. This could not have been the only process, because remnants of shells found in pits along the south-eastern shore of this island indicate that the shells of the murex were broken, and not ground; and the same is the case with those on the hill-side south of the city wall at Sidon. That would favor the old assertion that the coloring matter was obtained from a vessel in the throat of the animal yielding a single drop, after which the whole body was crushed to procure a dye of an inferior quality.



BROKEN MUREX.

The Tyrian purple was celebrated in Greece, even in the remote age of Homer, who sings of

> Belts,
> That, rich with Tyrian dye, refulgent glowed.

References to colors such as red, purple, and scarlet, in the Bible are more ancient still; indeed, from Genesis to Revelation they are so numerous, and so blended together, that it is almost impossible to particularize them. And those colors are equally popular at the present day amongst all classes of Orientals.

These and other matters which connect the history of Tyre with that of the people of God are invested with peculiar interest, and I have long desired to become better acquainted with them. I encounter a difficulty at the very beginning of her story. Isaiah calls Tyre the "daughter of Zidon;" and Joshua mentions "the strong city Tyre" in describing the boundary of Asher, from which it is certain that she was not a very young daughter even at the conquest of Canaan by the Jews.[1] Josephus, in stating the exact time in which Solomon's temple was built, says there had passed two hundred and forty years from the founding of Tyre to the building of the temple; but Joshua lived more than four hundred years before Solomon.[1] Here is an apparent discrepancy of more than two hundred years.

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[1] Isa. xxiii. 12; Josh. xix. 29.

Josephus lived after the beginning of the Christian era, and may have had in mind the island city, for it was probably built after continental Tyre. Palætyrus, ancient Tyre, had been subverted for several hundred years when the Jewish historian wrote, and he may have spoken only of that city in which the Roman world felt interested. Insular Tyre, very likely, was not built more than two hundred and forty years before the time of Solomon, and thus there would be no contradiction. The comparative age of the two cities is of very little importance; for if the first settlement was made on the shore, some of the inhabitants would have occupied the contiguous island. Or, reverse the order of priority, and then the neighboring shore would be occupied by people from the island. The name Palætyrus was probably given by the classic geographers and historians to that city which had been destroyed long before their day. It was no longer in existence when they wrote, and in mentioning it they would necessarily prefix some specific word to indicate that essential fact.

Where do you locate the site of continental Tyre?

Strabo says that it was thirty furlongs from insular Tyre to the south, which agrees with the position of the fountains at Râs el 'Ain. It would extend, according to that, northward, and include Tell Habeish as its acropolis, and in its greatest prosperity must have reached the shore opposite the island. Rashîd Pasha purchased an estate in that neighborhood, and planted thousands of mulberry-trees, besides olive and fruit trees. Thus far the success is not very satisfactory. The mulberry-trees flourish well enough, but the place has proved unhealthy, and the peasants refuse to reside there. I was interested to know that, wherever the Pasha's workmen dug on Tell Habeish, they came upon old foundations, which may have belonged to what Strabo calls Palætyrus.

The history of this fallen representative of ancient commerce, civilization, and wealth extends over ages of stirring activity; and here there is much to be seen, and many are the reflections suggested by what is no longer visible.

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[1] Ant. viii. 3, 1.

There are several Biblical references to Tyre, which represent her as instinct with life, or pulseless in death, with the taint of corruption and decay about her, and finally buried under the accumulated burdens of denunciation and prophecy. It is, indeed, long since Joshua divided yonder hills and valleys between Naphtali and Asher, when the border of Asher reached to "the strong city Tyre." In the days of David "Hiram king of Tyre sent cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons: and they built David a house."[1] Quarter of a century after, "when Joab and the captains went from the presence of the king [David], to number the children of Israel, they came to the strong hold of Tyre."[2]

In Solomon's time Tyre was able not merely to maintain her independence, but, by her unrivalled skill in architecture and the arts, she became an honored ally and necessary associate in building the Temple for the Most High to dwell in.[3] From that time forward she was associated more or less intimately with the history of God's chosen people for a thousand years.[4] After the revolt of the ten tribes, the establishment of the kingdom in Samaria, the marriage of Ahab to the infamous Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians, the Tyrians "remembered not the brotherly covenant," but made bond-slaves of the children of Judah, and sold them to the Grecians. Then it was that the prophets Joel and Amos denounced judgment against them.[5]

About seven hundred and twenty years before Christ, after Shalmaneser, King of Assyria, took Samaria, and carried the children of Israel into captivity, he laid siege to Tyre for five years, but without apparent result.[6] The Hebrew prophets frequently allude to the power of Tyre, her wealth and her luxury, and Ezekiel taxes the entire geography of the known world to set forth the extent of her commerce and the profusion of her riches.

Can you follow the geography of the prophet with any degree of certainty?

We can make a nearer approximation than might be supposed. The twenty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel well deserves a careful study, for, judged by its antiquity, it is a most important and suggestive commercial document; and now is the time, and this is the place, to examine it with pleasure and profit. Let us read over that chapter, and a few brief additions to the text will show how many of the countries there named are now known, and how far the commodities and the characteristics ascribed to them still maintain.

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[1] 2 Sam. v. 11.

[2] 2 Sam. xxiv. 4, 7.

[3] 1 Kings v. 1–12.

[4] 1 Kings ix. 10–14, 26–28; x. 11–22.

[5] Joel iii. 4–8; Amos i. 9, 10.

[6] Ant. ix. 14, 2.

"O thou that art situate at the entry of the sea"—significant of continental and insular Tyre united—"a merchant of the people for many isles, thus saith the Lord God; O Tyrus, thou hast said, I am of perfect beauty." "They have made all thy ship boards of fir trees of Senir"—Mount Hermon, called also Sirion and Shenir[1] —"they have taken cedars from Lebanon to make masts for thee. Of the oaks of Bashan have they made thine oars; and thy benches of ivory, brought out of the isles of Chittim"—Cyprus and the Grecian islands. "Fine linen with broidered work from Egypt was that which thou spreadest forth to be thy sail"—Egypt still deals in linen, though by no means "fine"—"blue, purple, and scarlet from the isles of Elishah"—the islands of the Ægean Sea—"was that which covered thee. The inhabitants of Zidon and Arvad were thy mariners"—Arvad, now the island of Ruwâd, is inhabited principally by sailors. "The ancients of Gebal were thy calkers" —and their city is still found on the shore north of Ruwâd; or, if Jebeil was meant, tar and pitch for calking are made on the mountains above it. "They of Persia and of Lud and of Phut were in thine army"—Phut and Lud were probably in Africa.

"Tarshish"—Tartessus, in Spain, where these metals abounded in ancient days—"was thy merchant, with silver, iron, tin, and lead." "Javan, Tubal, and Meshech"—Greece, Georgia, and Circassia—"traded the persons of men"—as is still done amongst the Circassians. "They of the house of Togarmah traded in thy fairs with horses and mules"—Armenia, and that country still produces those animals. "The men of Dedan"—along the north-western shore of the Persian Gulf—"brought thee for a present, horns of ivory and ebony. Syria occupied in thy fairs with emeralds, purple, and broidered work, and fine linen, and coral, and agate. Judah, and the land of Israel, traded in thy market wheat of Minnith"—in the country of the Ammonites, east of the Jordan—"and honey, and oil, and balm. Damascus was thy merchant in wine of Helbon"—probably a town some ten miles north of Damascus—"and white wool."

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[1] Deut. iii. 9.

"Dan and Javan going to and fro occupied in thy fairs: bright iron, cassia, and calamus were in thy markets. Arabia, and all the princes of Kedar, occupied with thee in lambs, and rams, and goats"—Southern Palestine is now supplied with them from those regions. "The merchants of Sheba and Raamah occupied in thy fairs with chief of all spices, and with all precious stones, and gold." Sheba and Raamah were probably along the western shore of the Persian Gulf, and traded with India, where spices grow and precious stones are found. "Haran, and Canneh, and Eden, the merchants of Sheba, Asshur, and Chilmad," which ends the list, were cities and countries along the Euphrates and Tigris. "These were thy merchants in all sorts of things, in blue clothes, and broidered work, and in chests of rich apparel, bound with cords, and made of cedar. The ships of Tarshish did sing of thee in thy market: and thou wast replenished, and made glorious in the midst of the seas."

So extensive was the commerce of Tyre, that from Egypt and Arabia, on the south, to Armenia and Georgia, on the north, and from the frontiers of India to the utmost islands of Greece, and Spain, came the caravans by land and the ships by sea to this little spot, laden with a commerce rarely exceeded in variety and extent. No doubt her merchants were princes, and her traffickers the honorable men of the earth.[1] How impressive the change! Well might "the isles shake at the sound of thy fall," O Tyrus![2] Her present prostration and poverty are abundantly sufficient to meet the demands of prophecy, even without reference to continental Tyre, which has been wiped off the map of the earth. She has sunk down to the dust beneath the heavy "burden" of prophecy; nor can she ever recover her ancient glory without a succession of great physical and political changes, such as the world has not seen, and which we have no reason to expect.

Must we not allow a very wide application to some of Ezekiel's names, in order to compass the entire range of Tyrian commerce?

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[1] Isa. xxiii. 8.

[2] Ezek. xxvi. 15–21.

No doubt; and therefore great latitude must be given westward to Tarshish, and northward to Javan, to Dedan eastward, and to Sheba and Raamah towards the south. Many of these names were probably applied to regions but little known and of great extent. Hiram had ships that traded from Ezion-geber, at the head of the Gulf of Akabah, out into the Indian Ocean, and brought from Ophir, once in three years, almug-trees, precious stones, gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks.[1] And so, also, through Carthage and Cadiz, Tyrian commerce spread along the whole northern coast of Africa and southern shores of Europe, and even to Ireland and England. Ezekiel could not have been ignorant of this, and we should explain his account according to this large interpretation.

Such was that "joyous city, whose antiquity is of ancient days," when Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to it for thirteen years; but it is doubtful whether even then it surrendered to him.[2] During the reign of Cyrus, King of Persia, the men of Tyre brought "cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea of Joppa," and once more assisted the Jews in building the Temple of the Lord at Jerusalem.[3] In those days "there dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem."[4]

The Tyrians sent their contingent to help Xerxes against the Greeks, and Tyre alone, of all the Phœnician cities, resisted Alexander the Great; and then followed that celebrated siege which lasted seven months. The island was connected with the mainland by a causeway, the city was taken, and the inhabitants either put to death or sold into slavery. "The Lord of hosts purposed" by that utter overthrow "to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth."[5] "Thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt be any more," says Ezekiel.[6] Alexander, as Arrian relates, scraped off the very dust of Old Tyre to build his causeway; and now none of its remains can be found, except by digging below the surface.

After the death of Alexander, Tyre was besieged for fourteen months by Antigonus. It revived again under the Syrian kings and the Roman emperors, and in the time of Christ he alludes to it in his denunciations against Chorazin and Bethsaida.[1] Our Lord visited the coasts of Tyre, and in the days of the apostles there were disciples here.[2]

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[1] 1 Kings ix. 26–28; x. 11, 22.

[2] Isa. xxiii. 7.

[3] Ezra iii. 7.

[4] Neh. xiii. 16.

[5] Isa. xxiii. 9.

[6] Ezek. xxvii. 36.

We can, of course, infer that Tyre early became a Christian city?

No doubt. Indeed, it is clear, from Acts xxi. 3–7, that Paul found a considerable number of disciples here when on his way to Jerusalem from Greece. He remained with them a week; and when he left "they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed." I have often been reminded of that impressive scene when taking leave of Tyrian friends outside of the city, on the same sea-shore. Leaving, they accompany you; returning, they go forth to meet and welcome you. It is, in fact, a time-honored custom, sadly falling into neglect before the formalities of European civilization.

It was on the occasion of the desire for peace by the Tyrians that "the angel of the Lord" smote "Herod the king," and he "gave up the ghost."[3] Jerome mentions it as the most noble and beautiful city in Phœnicia, trading with all the world. In A.D. 1291 Tyre was occupied by the Saracens. About one hundred and seventy years later the Crusaders captured it, and for more than a century and a half it remained in their possession. After the battle of Hattîn it was the only city of importance in Palestine that did not fall into the hands of Saladin.

Then the Venetians held a temporary sway over Tyre; the Egyptians destroyed its fortifications; the place itself was abandoned, and became a heap of ruins; the Druses made a feeble attempt to restore its fallen grandeur; the Metâwileh took possession of its tottering walls and prostrate towers, and laid the foundations of the present town; and then came the age of Turkish misrule.

Who can realize that this insignificant town is Tyre, the city whose prince did say, "I am a god, I sit in the seat of God, and in the midst of the seas?"[4]

There is nothing here, certainly, of that which led Joshua to call it "the strong city" more than three thousand years ago[1]—nothing of that mighty metropolis which baffled the proud Nebuchadnezzar and all his power for thirteen years, until "every head" in his army "was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled" in the hard service against Tyrus[2]—nothing in this wretched roadstead and empty harbor to remind one of the times when merry mariners did sing in her markets—no visible trace of those towering ramparts which so long resisted the utmost efforts of the great Alexander. All have vanished utterly like a troubled dream, and Tyre has sunk under the burden of prophecy. The very veracity of Jehovah stands pledged, or seems to be, to keep it so. "Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up. And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers [and they shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water]. I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock. It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea: for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God."[3] As she now is, and has long been, Tyre is God's witness; but, great, powerful, and populous, she would be the infidel's boast. This, however, she cannot be. Tyre will never rise from her dust to falsify the voice of prophecy.

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[1] Matt. xi. 21.

[2] Matt. xv. 21.

[3] Acts xii. 20–23.

[4] Ezek. xxviii. 2.

Dim is her glory, gone her fame,
Her boasted wealth has fled;
On her proud rock, alas! her shame,
The fisher's net is spread.
The Tyrian harp has slumbered long,
And Tyria's mirth is low;
The timbrel, dulcimer, and song
Are hushed, or wake to woe.

May 26th.

What may be the number of the inhabitants of modern Tyre?

About three thousand five hundred, half of whom are Metâwileh and Muhammedans, the rest Christians and Jews. The present town occupies nearly one-half of the peninsula, and lies around the harbor to the north-west and north. Like most Oriental towns, the houses of Tyre are small, not above two stories high, and the streets narrow, crooked, and filthy. Its inhabitants are alike destitute of enterprise and education, carrying on with Egypt and Beirût a small trade in tobacco raised in Belâd Beshâra, charcoal and wood from the neighboring hills, and wheat, straw, and lava millstones from the Haurân. This is a sorry schedule for the name of Tyre, but it is about all she can exhibit.

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[1] Josh. xix. 29.

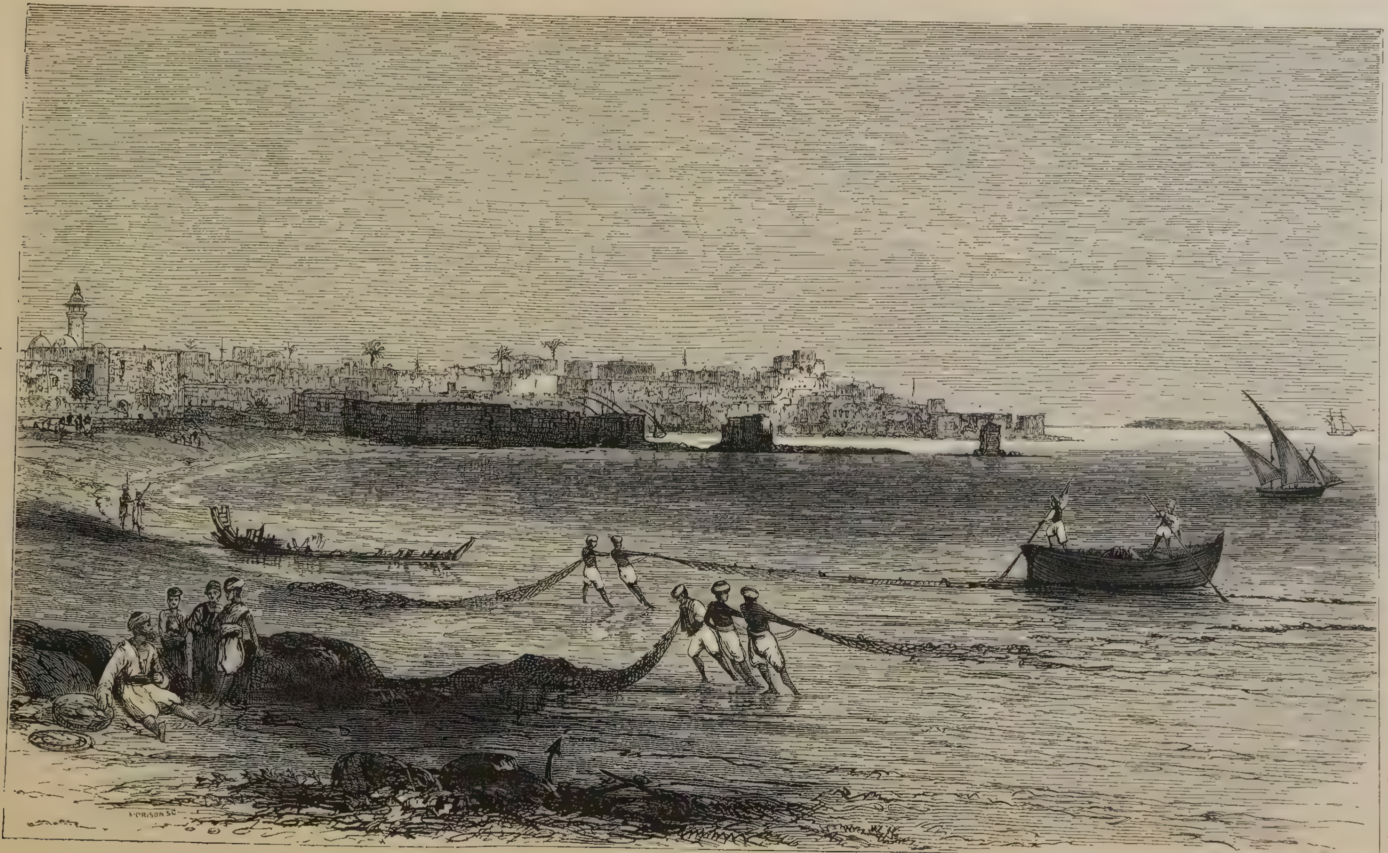
[2] Ezek. xxix. 18.

[3] Ezek. xxvi. 3–5, 12.

The distance from Tyre to Sidon is about twenty-two miles, and as our day's ride will be comparatively short and easy, we can spend another hour here. I wish to point out to you where the remains of Tyre's ancient eastern wall lie buried beneath the sand-heaps which have accumulated upon Alexander's causeway where it joined the island.

A few years ago some masons in search of building-stones dug through those sand-heaps there, about three hundred yards east of the fountain, and discovered a portion of an old wall, and a long vaulted and loop-holed culvert or gallery. In company with Mr. 'Akkâd, the American consular agent, I visited the place. We descended the narrow opening some twenty feet, and found ourselves beneath the arch of a most ancient vault. Lighting candles, we cautiously advanced, passing northward along the vaulted culvert which was probably built upon the extreme rocky ledge of the island. That strong and massive arched gallery abutted against the outside of the wall of the ancient city, and may have extended its whole length. The wall ran nearly north and south, and was constructed of large stones having the marginal bevel commonly believed to mark the work of Phœnician architects. There probably gathered those bold Tyrians who so long and so desperately resisted the undaunted Macedonian, and so often thwarted his attacks by destroying his works. Protected by that vaulted gallery, the soldiers could stand in safety within, and shoot their arrows through the loop-holes made for that purpose. Those remains may be of any age, and probably formed part of the great substructions which Hiram constructed along the eastern shore in order to enlarge the area of the island.

Mr. Kenrick thus describes them, condensing and combining the accounts of Menander and Dius, as given by Josephus in his "Antiquities," and his treatises against Apion; speaking of Hiram,



SÛR—TYRE.

he says: "Hiram succeeded his father Abibal shortly before the building of Solomon's Temple, and in his reign of thirty-four years greatly enlarged and embellished the city. By means of substructions on the eastern side of the rock, he gained a space which not only gave room for new dwellings, but for a wide public place, called by the Greeks the Eurychorus. Having joined the smaller island to the larger, he adorned the temple which stood on it with golden offerings (Ant. viii. 5, 3; Ap. i. 17.) He pulled down the ancient temples of Hercules and Astarte, and rebuilt them with a roofing of cedar of Lebanon."[1]

It would be comparatively easy to open a channel along the line of that ancient eastern wall from north to south, and thus make Tyre an island again. Indeed, William, Archbishop of Tyre in the days of the Crusades, says that was actually done in his time, and he calls the ditch "vallum late patens," something more than an ordinary fosse. Into it the sea could be introduced from both sides, north and south. That buried section of the old eastern wall I regard as the most interesting relic of ancient Tyre. But it is time for us to be in the saddle.

That broken aqueduct which comes quite down to the causeway, if it did not cross it, must have been made to conduct the water from Râs el 'Ain to the city.

Of course it was constructed after the time of Alexander, and chiefly, as I suppose, to irrigate the gardens and fields of that large continental city which is mentioned by the classic geographers. By means of such an inexhaustible supply of water the entire plain may have been converted into a paradise of fruits and flowers by the luxurious merchants of Tyre. And there are not wanting traces of such a transformation both to the south and north of the aqueduct.

I notice a castle-like structure on the hill to the north-east of our road; is there anything interesting about it?

It is now a khân, but was probably built by the Crusaders to command the bridge over the Lîtâny just beyond it. That river is here called el Kâsimîyeh, probably derived from Kâsim, a proper name, signifying the divider. With its precipitous and almost im-

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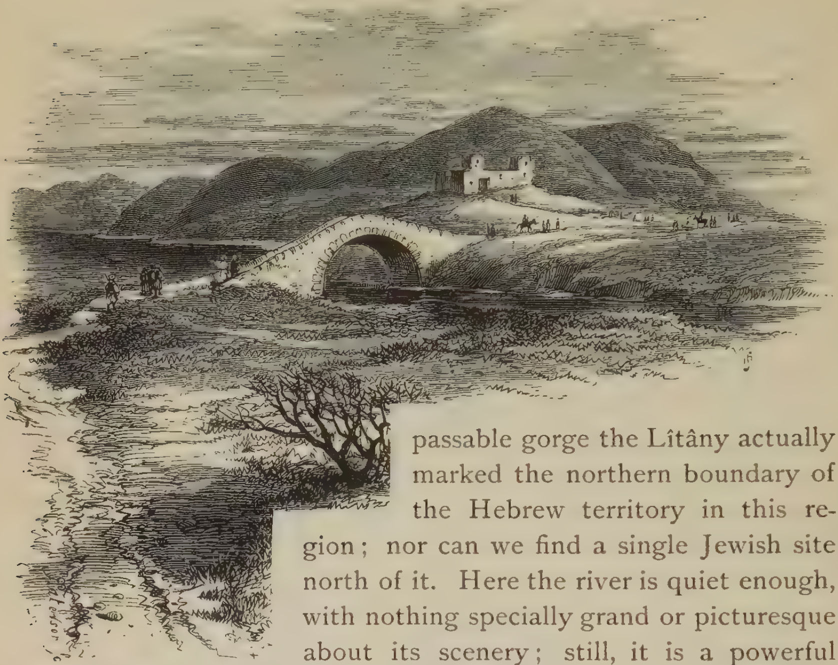
[1] Kenrick's Phœnicia, p. 349.



JISR EL KÂSIMÎYEH—BRIDGE OVER THE LÎTÂNY.

passable gorge the Lîtâny actually marked the northern boundary of the Hebrew territory in this region; nor can we find a single Jewish site north of it. Here the river is quiet enough, with nothing specially grand or picturesque about its scenery; still, it is a powerful stream, and dangerous to ford even in summer. The bridge which spans it by one lofty arch is not ancient. Maundrell, when he passed this way in the spring of 1696, found it broken down, and he had great difficulty in crossing the river. So should we in like circumstances.

The small delta formed by the river is extremely fertile, but very unhealthy; so also is the river gorge above the bridge. On that account a considerable portion of it is abandoned to the boar, the gazelle, and other wild animals. The sea near the mouth of the river abounds with fish, and even the Beirût market is supplied from it, especially during Lent.

I am surprised to find this plain between the mountains and the sea so utterly forsaken. There is not a village, not even a single house or hovel, to be seen upon it.

It was not always so, however. I have followed this seaboard from Tyre to Sidon, and found many places where there had been inhabitants in olden times. But the plain is now cultivated by the people who reside on the eastern foot-hills.

Have they retired to those hills to avoid the heat of the plain, or for the sake of protection from lawless bands passing up and down the coast?

As far back as the time of Thucydides at least the people were accustomed to build their towns at a considerable distance from the shore, and in strong positions, to escape the visits of pirates, who then infested the sea. Any place exposed to such lawless attacks, and unable to defend itself, would of course be abandoned; but as soon as the sea was cleared of pirates the inhabitants would return and rebuild. Similar causes have long since reduced Cæsarea, Askelon, and other places to almost hopeless desolation.

I suppose the main reason for the desertion of this particular part of the coast is to be found in an entire change of employment. The Phœnicians were mariners, and hence, wherever there was a sandy beach upon which to draw up their small craft, or a sheltered cove where they could ride at anchor, there a village sprang up and flourished. Now there are no mariners; not a boat is owned by any of these peasants; they are exclusively given to agriculture, and have no occasion to dwell near the shore. Of course it is better for them to reside on the hills, in those villages on the mountain-side. That white dome covers the tomb of a saint called Neby Sûr. An aged and surly sheikh of the village told me that Sûr was the grandson of Joshua, the son of Nun, on whom be peace. As such, I am willing to leave him in unquestioned possession of his sepulchre and pedigree, honored as a saint by the Metâwileh. It is interesting, however, to hear these austere disciples of 'Ali, as ignorant of history as the oxen they punch with their goads, repeat venerable Bible names as "household words."

This part of the plain is called Abu el Aswad—literally, father of the black—from a brook of that name which traverses the centre of it. That name was probably suggested by the dark color of the soil. In winter the plain becomes an impracticable marsh, and then the road is converted into black, tenacious, and seemingly bottomless mud. This little river, Abu el Aswad, is remarkable for perplexing quicksands near its entrance into the sea. My horse once sank in one of them, and plunged and floundered violently before he extricated himself and landed me on the other side. It was on that account that the Romans built that bridge over the river just above our road. The very substantial round arch is still nearly perfect, and presents a good specimen of Roman work; but the approaches to it on both sides are broken away, making it of no avail. Near it is a ruined khân.

The bridge reminds me of a great flood which occurred here in the heat of summer a few years ago. A seil, or cloud-burst, broke on the hills above us, and sent down a raging torrent, sweeping all before it—cattle, sheep, goats, and even gazelles, leaving them dead upon the plain. When I first heard the story from a company of ploughmen near the bridge, I regarded their account of that destructive flood as a bit of Arab exaggeration, but subsequent experience rendered it credible. Seils occur nearly every year in some part of this country, and such catastrophes are not at all imaginary. Burckhardt describes one from which he was in great danger of being drowned.

Mr. Holland gives a graphic account of a seil which burst over Wady Feirân, in the Sinai Peninsula. He had to run for his life; hundreds of palm-trees, scores of sheep and goats, camels and donkeys, even women and children, were washed away, and the whole valley was changed. "I could not have believed it possible in so short a time," he says, "had I not witnessed it with my own eyes." When I was travelling in that same region, our sheikh was careful never to pitch the tents in a narrow wady, where we might be carried away by one of those devastating cloud-bursts.

This may help us to understand the full meaning of Biblical writers when they allude to such phenomena, with which, as natives of this country, they were perfectly familiar. The Hebrew word is generally translated seil in the Arabic Bible, and that rendering gives to certain passages a meaning quite specific and significant. Thus in Isaiah iv. 6, where we have in English, "a covert from storm and from rain," it is in Arabic, from the seil and rain. So, also, in chapter twenty-five, verse four, the Lord is said to be a refuge from the seil, instead of merely from the storm. In the second verse of the twenty-eighth chapter the Arabic reads, "Like a seil of deep, overwhelming waters." Thus, also, in Habakkuk iii. 10, the rendering in Arabic is, a seil of water overwhelmed.

But to return from this digression to matters of interest along our present pathway. These ruins along the shore may probably mark the site of Ornithonopolis, little town of Ornithon, placed by Strabo between Tyre and Sidon, though that is not certain. The place is now called 'Adlân.

Those perpendicular cliffs along the edge of the plain on our right abound in rock-cut tombs. Have they no name?

There was the necropolis of this little town. The tombs were evidently cut by quarriers. The quarries extend southward, and the inhabitants of this region seem to have done nothing but quarry stone for other cities and cut sepulchres for themselves. Many of those tombs are as perfect as when first made, but the doors are all gone, and the tombs empty, and were so, most likely, two thousand years ago. They are nearly all of the same form, having a small chamber in front, and a door leading from that into the tomb, which is about six feet square, with niches on three sides for the dead, the door occupying the fourth. Some of them were cut into the rock, in which case a square shaft was sunk about three feet deep, and from that a low door led into the tomb. A deep groove ran round the rock above, to turn the water away from the entrance. There are a few words of a Greek inscription over that tomb just south of one of the caves. The rest are destitute of architectural ornament, device, or inscription. The ancient Phœnicians delighted to cut their tombs in the perpendicular face of the rock left in quarrying, as is seen on all this coast, and particularly at Tartûs, Lâdikîyeh, and Suweidîyeh. Along the road from 'Adlân northward for a short distance there are shapeless ruins —foundations of houses, fragments of tessellated pavements, and other remains belonging to Orinthonopolis.

That low, flat tell on our right, with its ruined khân, is called Khaizerân, and so is the brawling brook south of it. The plain and rocky hill-side are strewn with the remains of a considerable place, and on the top of that rugged promontory are ancient sarcophagi cut in the rock. The base of the mountain between it and the village of Sŭrafend abounds in old quarries, with their accompanying sepulchres for the dead. That dome near the seashore, surmounting the tomb of Wely el Khŭdr Abu 'Abbas, is supposed by Dr. Robinson to mark the site of the Christian chapel built by the Crusaders "near the port [of Sarepta], and over the reputed spot where Elijah dwelt and raised the widow's son from the dead." El Khŭdr is the Moslem name of St. George, for which somewhat fabulous saint the Muhammedans have very great respect. Observe what masses of rubbish are heaped up along the shore and over the plain, amongst which appear broken columns, marble slabs, sarcophagi, and other indications of the existence of a town here in former times.

That small village high up on the hill to the east of us, called Sŭrafend, is the modern representative of Sarepta.[1] It seems to have been built there after the twelfth century, for at the time of the Crusades the city stood on the shore. The widow's cave, and all other traditional sites now shown under the hill of Sŭrafend, are apocryphal. Our translation makes Elijah live in a loft, but not very accurately. The word used in the Hebrew is similar to the common Arabic one, 'allîyeh, applied to the upper room of a house. The 'allîyeh is the most desirable and generally the best fitted up room in the house, and is still given to guests who are to be treated with honor. The women, the children, and the servants live below, and their apartments are on the ground-floor. The houses of the poorer class have no 'allîyeh. We may infer several things from this word: that the mode of building in Elijah's time, and the custom of giving the 'allîyeh to the guest, were the same as now; also, that the widow was not originally from the poorest class, but that her extreme destitution was owing to the dreadful famine which then prevailed. The "little chamber on the wall" made for Elisha by the Shunammite and her husband was also an 'allîyeh, and was furnished with "a bed, a table, a stool, and a candlestick," just as such guest-chambers are now.[2] They are more retired than the lower apartments of the house, and of course better adapted to the comfort of the guests.

One ought not to pass away from this region without laying up in his heart the noble lesson taught by the widow and her "barrel of meal." In her utmost want, about to cook the last morsel for herself and her son, and die, she yet listened to the call of humanity, and brought water for the thirsty prophet, and shared with him her final meal. Let us do likewise, and in the hours of greatest darkness and destitution share with those more needy than ourselves, and let the morrow take thought for itself. Who does not often need the lesson to prompt his reluctant soul to deeds of charity, and the result to fortify his feeble faith?

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[1] 1 Kings xvii. 8–24.

[2] 2 Kings iv. 8–10.

Is it not nearly certain that our blessed Lord once walked over this very plain, and gazed on those identical hills? I have the impression that he came to Sarepta, in the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, to visit, perhaps, the place where his great forerunner, Elijah, lived and wrought miracles, and that the woman of Canaan, whom Mark calls a Syro-phœnician, belonged to the city of that poor widow with whom the prophet resided.[1] Elijah raised that widow's son from death. The Saviour delivered this one's daughter from the power of the devil.

However that may be, many poor Gentile sinners have urged the plea of the Syro-phœnician woman for the crumbs of mercy which fall from the Lord's table, and have been dismissed with the like benediction. The Saviour of the world has, however, set his seal of immortality on Sarepta. Its name will ever teach the great truth that the favor of our common Father above was never confined within the narrow limits of Jacob's seed; for "many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias; but unto none of them was he sent, save unto a woman that was a widow" within its walls.[2] Let them of the "synagogue" be "filled with wrath," but we shall cherish the memory of Sarepta all the more for these impressive lessons.

The main ruins of Sarepta extend northward along the shore for a mile or more, and are very considerable. Those who merely ride along the modern road form too low an estimate of the size of the ancient city. There are two distinct groups of ruins. One on the headland, immediately west of 'Ain el Kanterah, where may have been the harbor of Sarepta; and there, I suppose, was the fortress which Phocas mentions in the twelfth century, and also the chapel erected over the reputed house of the widow. Some of those old foundations which we have just examined may mark the spot.

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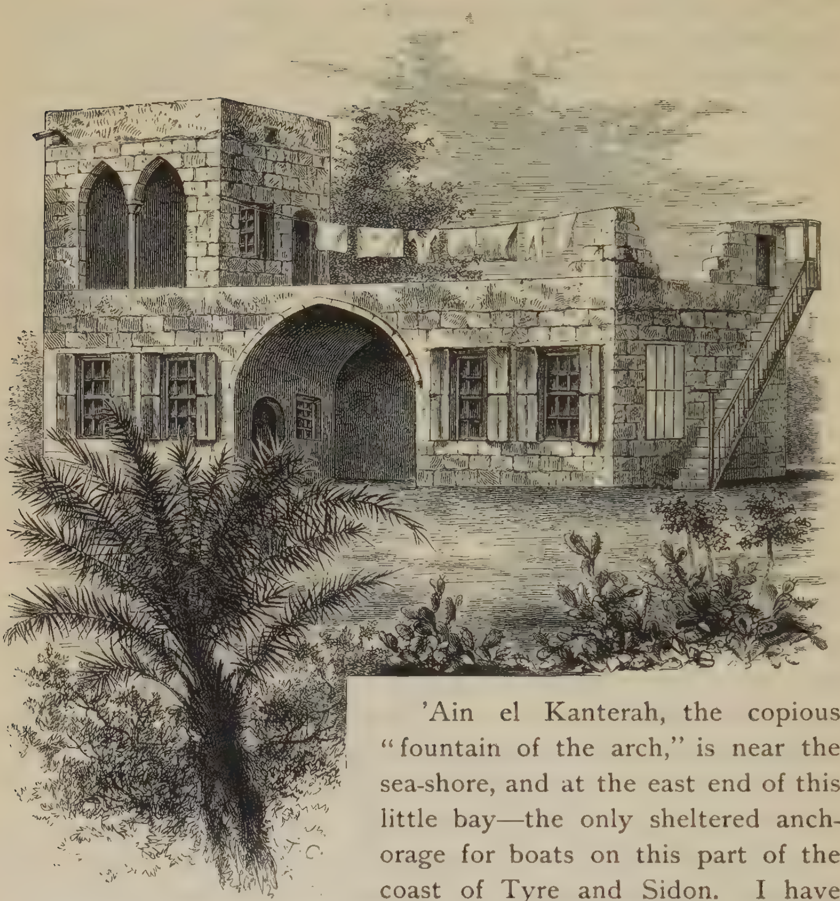
[1] Matt. xv. 21–28; Mark vii. 24–30.

[2] Luke iv. 25–29.



EL 'ALLÎYEH—GUEST-CHAMBER.

'Ain el Kanterah, the copious "fountain of the arch," is near the sea-shore, and at the east end of this little bay—the only sheltered anchorage for boats on this part of the coast of Tyre and Sidon. I have often pitched my tent on the beach under the tall tamarisk-trees that line the shore, and not far from this apology for a khân.

That is a singular-looking tell which seems to rise from the sand on the very margin of the sea.

The tell and the khân near it bear the name of el Bûrak, from some fountains out in the plain above it, once surrounded by walls, which are now broken, and the water escapes to the sea.

Sidon presents quite an imposing appearance from here.

As usual with all Oriental cities, "'tis distance lends enchantment to the view." It is about eight miles from 'Ain el Kanterah to Sidon, with very little to attract attention along the way, except Nahr ez Zaherâny, the flowery river, with its broken bridge of three arches, embowered by a thicket of blooming oleanders. Near the bridge is a Roman mile-stone, the first we have seen along this coast.

In the wildest of those mountain gorges above our path, whose outlines lie in misty shadows along the southern end of Lebanon, bursts out a copious spring called Neb'a et Tâsy—Fountain of the Cup. It is the source of the Zaherâny. The ancient Sidonians coveted that ice-cold water, and did actually lead it to their city along a line of canal which might well confound the boldest engineer. A channel was hewn in the rock near the fountain-head, into which the water was turned, and the aqueduct was carried thence down the gorge southward, then around the mountain and below the village of Jerjû'a; after which it was conducted northward for eight miles along Jebel Rîhân, descending into Wady Kefrah, and spanning a deep ravine over high arches below Jebâ'a. Beyond that the aqueduct was led along the edge of cliffs, where goats can scarcely keep their feet, for more than a mile, and thence it followed the ridge of Kefr Milkeh, past that village, into Wady Sanîk, where it was joined by another aqueduct from Neb'a er Râhib, the source of the river Sanîk. The two canals were taken thence down the valley, but separately, one about fifteen feet above the other. The system of arches by which those works were carried across the ravines and rivers is still almost perfect, and in some places the cliffs to which they cling are nearly perpendicular for several miles.

This work, thus briefly described, reflects much credit not only on the ancient inhabitants of Sidon, but also on the science, skill, and courage of her engineers. Who constructed those canals, and when, are questions which cannot now be answered. Amongst the natives they bear the name of Sit Zebeideh, the wife of Haroun el Raschîd, author of every ancient work of the kind in this country, except those built by "Suleiman Ibn Daûd, upon whom be peace." Everything about those broken aqueducts bears witness to their extreme age. The cement of the aqueduct above Kefr Milkeh has turned to stone, or has been coated with a calcareous deposit as hard, so that the wall looks like crystalline rock, as compact as the mountain limestone about it. At Jerjû'a, the village near Neb'a et Tâsy, a tombstone was dug up, having the figure of a boy carved upon it, with a Greek inscription by the side of him; but it reveals nothing as to the origin of the canals.

We have now reached the river Sanîk; but before we cross you can see that it enters the plain from the mountains through that gorge about a mile to the east of us. The name of the high ridge on the southern bank of the river, where it descends steeply to the plain, is called el Muntarah, and from the ruins of the temple on the summit there is an extensive view northward over the gardens of Sidon. That little village at the base of the ridge is called, by some strange caprice, Derb es Sîn, the road to China.

Here, just beyond the khân on the north bank of the river Sanîk, is one of Sidon's Roman antiquities. Those two mighty emperors, Septimus Severus, and his son, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, sought to immortalize their august names by inscribing on this mile-stone, a large granite column, the important fact that they mended this road. The gardens of Sidon commence with this one on our right, and extend to the rocky point, or cape, about three miles north of the city. They occupy the entire plain, over one mile in breadth, between the mountains and the sea, and are among the finest in this country.

In the variety and beauty of its immediate surroundings Sidon is in every respect superior to Tyre. Approaching it from this direction we get only the southern view of it, dominated by the Crusading castle of St. Louis, and see very little of the city itself. The hill on which the castle stands rises about two hundred feet above the crescent-shaped bay to the west and south-west of it, and then falls gradually away to the north-west for about half a mile towards the sea castle and the inner harbor, thus forming the small promontory upon which the city is built. To one coming from the north and east the city appears to great advantage.

More than quarter of a century has passed since I resided for several years in Sidon, and this visit to it, at the close of our long journey through the Holy Land, is like that of the pilgrim returning to his old home. In many respects it was, and it still is, a delightful place of abode, and my recollections of it are exceedingly pleasant. We shall find our tents pitched on the merjy, near the tamarisk-trees bordering the gardens south of Wely Sheikh Kabarûh, and opposite the Jewish cemetery, with the city in full view, and only a short distance to the north of us.

May 26th. Evening.

In the mulberry garden east of that curious avenue of over-arching acacia-trees, through which we passed just before reaching our tents, some workmen, many years ago, while digging over the soil, found several copper pots, which contained a large quantity of ancient gold coin. The poor fellows concealed the discovery with the greatest care; but they were wild with excitement, and too many to keep such a secret. The governor of the city heard of it, and arrested all who had not fled. He recovered two of the pots, placed them beside him, and compelled them to refill them with coin. In that way he obtained between two and three thousand, but it is certain that there remain hundreds, if not thousands, which he could not get. They were all coins of Alexander and his father Philip, of pure gold, each one worth about a sovereign. As there was no mixture of other coins later than the time of Alexander, the deposit must have been made during his reign, or immediately after. It may have been royal treasure, which one of Alexander's officers concealed when he heard of his unexpected death in Babylon, intending to appropriate it to himself, but, being apprehended, slain, or driven away by some of the revolutions which followed that event, the coin remained where he had hid it. If we remember how much more valuable gold was then, the amount of that deposit will surprise us; nor does it seem likely that any private individual in Sidon could have gathered what was probably at that time equivalent to forty thousand pounds sterling, and all of those particular coins of Philip and Alexander. The latter appears on

COINS OF ALEXANDER AND PHILIP.

the coins as he is usually represented, and Philip is associated with the chariot and horses, of which he was so proud.

There are frequent allusions to hid treasure in the Bible. Even in Job, perhaps the oldest book in the world, we read that "the bitter in soul long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures."[1] Hardly another comparison within the compass of human actions is more vivid than that. I have heard of diggers fainting away when they came upon even a single coin. There are many persons digging for hid treasure all over the country, and not a few spend their last farthing in those efforts.

Such operations are carried on with the utmost secrecy, accompanied with charms and incantations against the jân and other spirits which are said to keep guard over hid treasures. The belief in the existence of those guards, and their dangerous character, is just as prevalent now as in ancient times. Intelligent persons have assured me that they have come upon slabs of stone, closing up doors to secret chambers, which no power on earth could remove, because the proper password or charm is lost. Others soberly assert that they have been driven away by terrible jân, who threatened them with instant death if they attempted to force the doors. They evidently believe what they say, and I suspect that their fears are not always imaginary. Persons may be watching their midnight labor, and when anything is found they suddenly announce themselves as ghouls or jân, and thus frighten them out of the pit, and out of their wits as well.

The Arabs believe that the Greeks and the Mughâribeh possess a dâlîl, or guide, by which they discover those treasures; and many of the vagabond Greeks cheat the ignorant and the credulous by contracting to lead them to the proper spot to dig; and they rarely point out a place entirely destitute of concealed chambers and other curious indications; but I never knew an instance where anything of value was obtained from the places indicated by those dâlîls. On the contrary, such deposits of hid treasure are always found by accident; and that is the more remarkable when it is remembered that many are either secretly or openly searching for them all over the land.

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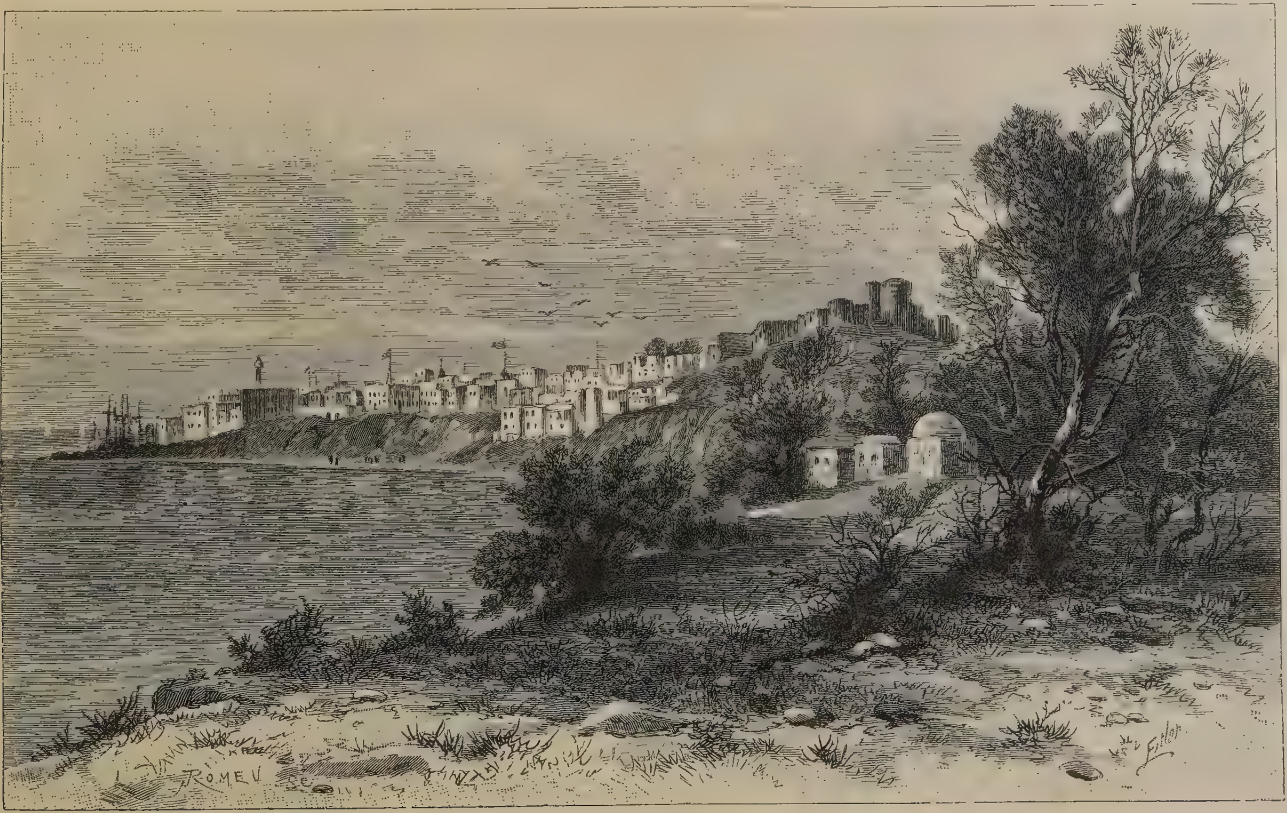
[1] Job iii. 20, 21.



SAIDA—SIDON.

Solomon has drawn a proverb from this practice: "If thou seekest her [understanding] as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God."[1] Alas! how few manifest any of this earnestness in seeking for wisdom.

Our blessed Lord also founds one of his divine parables on this same custom: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field."[2] It is not difficult to account for such hid treasure. This country has always been subject to revolutions, invasions, and calamities of various kinds, and hence a feeling of insecurity hovers over the land like a dismal spectre. The Government robs, and so do the rulers and the clergy; Arabs rush in from the desert and plunder; warriors and conquerors from every part of the world sweep over the land, carrying everything away that falls into their hands. Then there are, and always have been, intestine commotions and wars, such as laid Lebanon in ruins in 1841, and in 1845, and in 1860. At such times many bury their gold and jewels, and in most cases the owners are killed, and no one knows where the treasure was concealed.

Then, again, this country has ever been subject to earthquakes, which bury everything beneath her ruined cities. Safed was thus dashed to the ground in a moment, house falling upon house down the steep mountain-side, and many entire families were cut off. Some were known to have had money, and it was a shocking spectacle to see hardened wretches prowling about under the ruins, amidst the dead and the dying, in search of their treasures. The population of the surrounding villages, undeterred by the awful judgment which had laid their own buildings in heaps, and buried many of their families alive, rushed into Safed to dig out the entombed riches of the Jews. The same shocking spectacle is witnessed in times of plague or cholera. People hide their money to keep it from those miscreants who take advantage of the general consternation to break into the houses and rob. We need not be surprised, therefore, to find that in this country no custom is so firmly rooted as this, of searching for hid treasure, and that there always has been some real foundation for it.

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[1] Prov. ii. 4, 5.

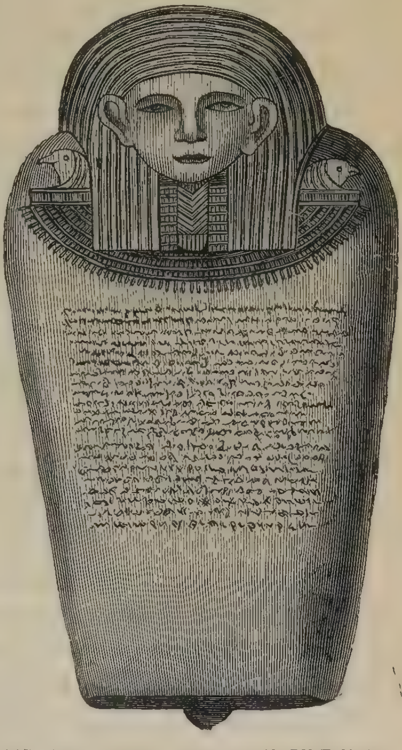
[2] Matt. xiii. 44.

Yonder on the eastern part of the plain is Mughârat Tublûn, one of Sidon's most ancient cemeteries. The Phœnicians took great pains to secure their dead from being disturbed, but in vain, as we shall see. They first cut away the rock above the cave at Tublûn, so as to make a surface perfectly level. That has long been the general threshing-floor for those who farm this beautiful plain; beneath it, however, are countless chambers for the dead—catacombs, in fact, arranged in a peculiar manner. In some cases a square shaft was sunk through the rock ten, twenty, or thirty feet, according to the ability of the maker. From that, doors at different depths opened into halls and rooms, around the sides of which were cut the niches for the dead. To make assurance doubly sure, some niches were sunk in the floor of the chambers, the sarcophagi deposited there, and then the whole was levelled off, and a flooring of cement or stone was laid on above. But even sarcophagi thus concealed have been discovered and rifled during the long ages of earnest search for hid treasure.

Mr. Renan, in his "Mission de Phénicie," says of this cave that the natives pronounce and spell the name Mughârat Tublûn, but that this is assuredly an error, and compares it with the same error in the name Medînet Habu for Medînet Tabu, Thebes. Accordingly, he spells it Mughârat Ablûn, and translates it Cave of Apollo. In this he may be correct, for as there is no *p* in the Arabic alphabet, Apollo would be spelled with a *b;* and as this imparts a classic importance to the title, we willingly accept it for what it may be worth. If any one, however, should inquire of a native the way to Mughârat Ablûn, or Biâder Ablûn, the threshing-floors of Ablûn, he would not be understood.

On the morning of January 20th, 1855, Sidon was startled out of her usual quietude by the report that an extraordinary sarcophagus had been discovered, which had a long inscription in an unknown character on the lid. All flocked to see it, and I amongst the rest, but with very moderate expectations. I had been disappointed too often to place much confidence in native reports. Judge, therefore, of my surprise to find that this unknown character was Phœnician. I at once became as deeply interested as the gold-digger or treasure-hunter, for I had searched in vain, during twenty years, for a single word in that character.

The lid of that sarcophagus is wrought in the form of a mummy, with the face uncovered, and having a countenance and costume of a decided Egyptian type. The features are large and prominent, the forehead is rather low, the eyes almond-shaped, but full and protruding, the nose broad and flat, the lips thick, the chin quite short, and the ears too large and conspicuous for beauty. A pleasant expression is over the countenance, and the execution of the whole work is decidedly superior to anything of the kind in this country. On each shoulder is a bird, and something depends from the chin, like a beard, but it probably belongs to the head-dress, which resembles that seen on Egyptian mummy cases.


LID OF SARCOPHAGUS, WITH PHŒNICIAN INSCRIPTION.

The lid, and consequently the figure upon it, is too wide for symmetrical beauty. It is four feet broad, and only about seven in length. The material is black sienite, intensely hard, and retains an excellent polish. The inscription is in twenty-two long lines, and the letters, though not cut deep, are in good preservation, and easily read. There is nothing like it in the whole compass of Phœnician remains. I sent a copy of it to Chevalier Bunsen, who transmitted it to Professor Dietrich, then engaged in editing a new edition of Gesenius's learned work on the Phœnician language and antiquities. That gentleman published a translation, with an elaborate critique upon it. Other copies were sent to France, England,

and America. A somewhat free rendering of this curious record, after the French version, runs thus:

"In the month Bul, in the fourteenth—xiv.—of my reign, King Ashmanezer, the King of the Sidonians, son of Tabnith, King of the Sidonians, King Ashmanezer, King of the Sidonians, spake, saying, I am snatched away before my time, like the flowing of a river. Then I have made a house for my funeral resting-place, and am lying in this sarcophagus, and in this sepulchre, the place which I have built. My prohibition to every royal person, and to every man, not to open my sepulchre, and not to seek with me treasures—for there are no treasures with me—nor to take away the sarcophagus of my funeral couch, nor to transfer me with my funeral couch upon the couch of another; and, if men command to do so, listen not to their opinion, because every royal person, and every man who shall open this funeral couch, or who shall take away the sarcophagus of this funeral couch, or who shall transfer me with the funeral couch, he shall have no funeral with the dead, nor be buried in a sepulchre, nor leave behind them son or posterity; and the holy gods, with the king that shall rule over them, shall cut off that royal person, and that man who has opened my couch, or who has abstracted this sarcophagus, and so also the posterity of that royal person, or of that man, whoever he be; nor shall his root be planted downward, nor his fruit spring upward; and he shall be accursed amongst those living under the sun, because I am to be pitied—snatched away before my time, like a flowing river. Then I have made this edifice for my funeral resting-place, for I am Ashmanezer, King of the Sidonians, son of Tabnith, King of the Sidonians, grandson of Ashmanezer, King of the Sidonians; and my mother, Immiastoreth, priestess of Astarte, our sovereign queen, daughter of King Ashmanezer, King of the Sidonians. It is we who have built this temple of the gods * * * in Sidon by the sea, and the heavenly powers have rendered Astarte favorable. And it is we who have erected the temple to Esmuno, and the sanctuary of Ene Dalil in the mountain. The heavenly powers have established me on the throne; and it is we who have built the temples to the gods of the Sidonians in Sidon by the sea [or maritime Sidon]: the temple of Baal-Sidon, and the temple of Astarte, the glory of Baal, lords of kings who bestowed on us Dor and Joppa, and ample corn-lands which are at the root of Dan; extending the power which I have founded, they added them to the bounds of the land, establishing them to the Sidonians forever.

"My prohibition upon every royal person, and upon every man who shall open upon me, or uncover me, or shall transfer me with this funeral couch, or take away the sarcophagus of my funeral couch; lest the holy gods desert them, and cut off that royal person, or that man, whoever he may be, and their posterity forever."

The renderings of this inscription in Europe and America vary, but the names it contains cannot be questioned: Baal and Ashtaroth were the gods of the Zidonians; Dor, and Joppa, and Dan were well-known places in the days of Joshua.[1]

At what time there was a king of Sidon so powerful as to possess Dor and Jaffa, it is probably useless to inquire. The mention of "ample corn-lands at the root of Dan" is certainly unexpected. The Hûleh, from the very root of Tell el Kâdy, Dan, is amongst the richest "corn-lands" in this country. We know from the eighteenth chapter of the Book of Judges that Laish, or Dan, was once a colony of Sidon, but Chevalier Bunsen wrote to me that he would be a bold man who should venture to place the date of the inscription at an earlier period than the fourth century before our era. The Duc de Luynes, however, supposes that Ashmanezer lived in the seventh century before Christ, and others carry the date of his reign as far back as the eleventh century.

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[1] Judges ii. 13; Josh. xi. 2; xix. 46–48.

King Ashmanezer seems to have had serious apprehensions of being disturbed, and multiplied his maledictions upon whomsoever should do it. These imprecations will scarcely be visited upon the officers of the French corvette "La Sérieuse," on board of which the sarcophagus was carried to France; or on the Duc de Luynes, by whose munificence that interesting relic of Phœnicia is now deposited in the Museum of the Louvre; for it had been opened by some former rifler of tombs, probably in search of treasure, notwithstanding the declaration of the king that there was none with him. It is curious to notice this precaution, proving that the practice of digging for hid treasures, as Job expresses it, and rifling the tombs of kings for the same purpose, was extremely ancient.

Many of the letters in that inscription so closely resemble those of our own alphabet, that one can scarcely be mistaken in tracing ours up through the Roman and the Greek to that of Phœnicia; and this accords with and confirms the ancient tradition in regard to the origin of the Greek alphabet. Still more interesting is the fact that the characters on that stone are so like the old Hebrew as to establish their close relationship, and that the language of the two peoples, as well as their alphabet, were nearly identical. This accords with ancient history. In all incidental notices of the intercourse between the patriarchs and their descendants and the inhabitants of this land, that fact is necessarily implied. It was only in Egypt that they heard a language which they could not understand.[1] The Phœnicians were the more ancient people, and had attained a high civilization while the patriarchs still abode in tents and tended their flocks and herds.

Are there no other antiquities about Sidon?

Not many, and none very striking. She is too old. Her decline commenced "before antiquity began." There are a few objects, however, besides the tombs, in which her greatness was buried thousands of years ago, which are worthy of attention. The large stones in the north-west angle of the inner harbor, each one being some ten feet square, were no doubt put there in the days of

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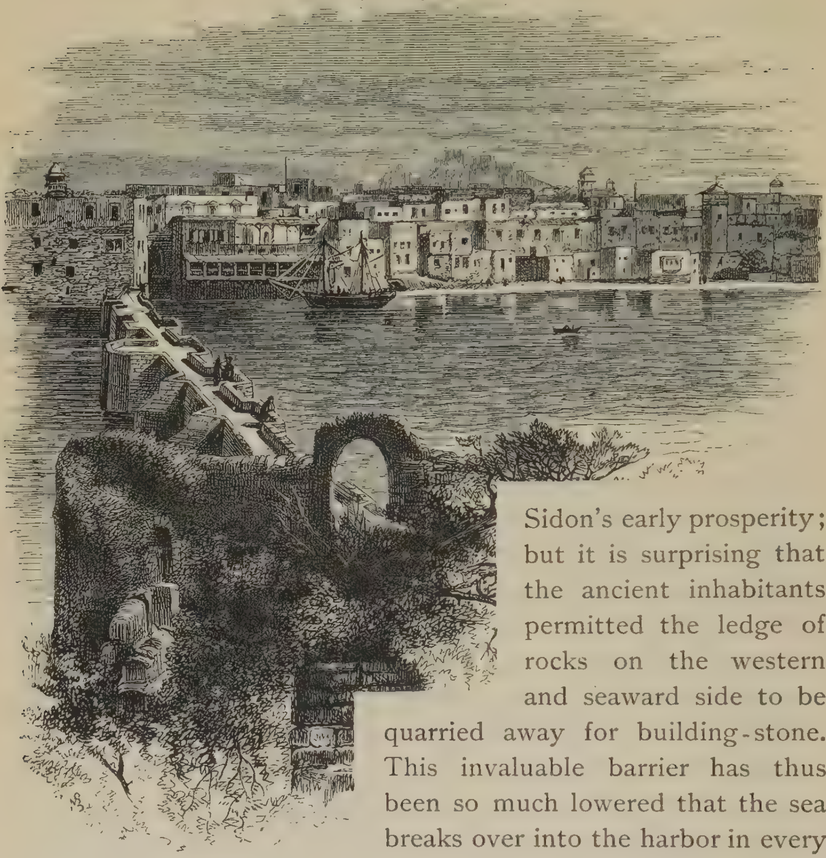
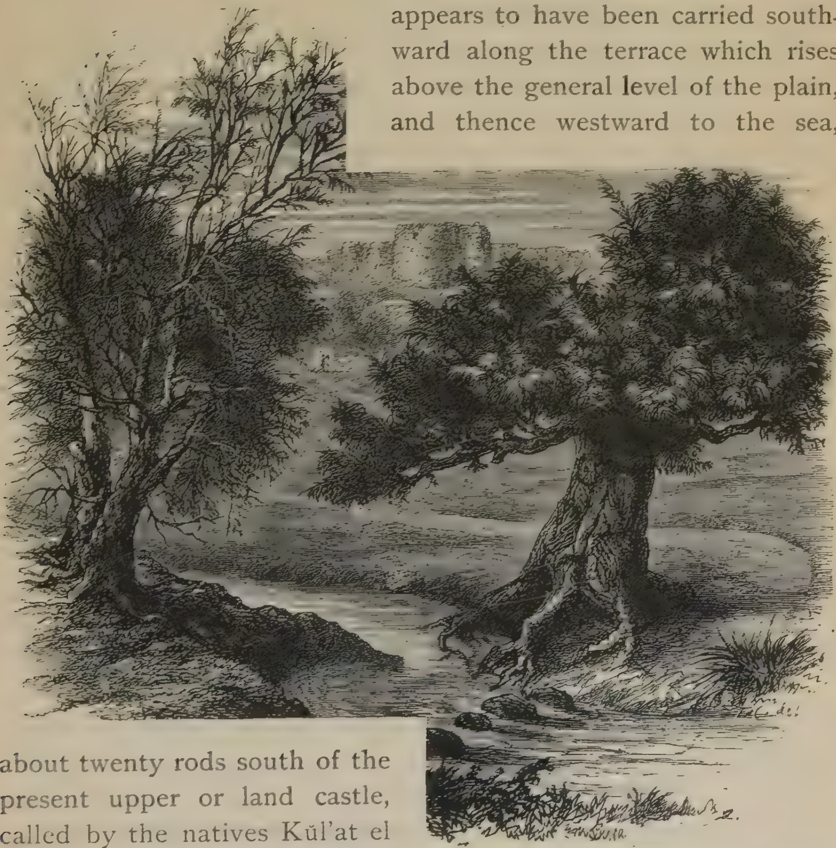
[1] Psa. lxxxi. 5; cxiv. 1.



MINAT SAIDA—INTERIOR HARBOR.
KŬL'AT EL BAHR—THE SEA CASTLE.

Sidon's early prosperity; but it is surprising that the ancient inhabitants permitted the ledge of rocks on the western and seaward side to be quarried away for building-stone. This invaluable barrier has thus been so much lowered that the sea breaks over into the harbor in every storm, not only endangering "the ships" and boats, but causing a strong current to set eastward under the bridge, with its nine arches, which leads to the sea castle. Those arches will, ere long, give way, as others have done before them, and thus the castle will be cut off from communication with the city.

That castle itself, though mostly in ruins, has something to interest the antiquary. The oldest part is built nearly solid, with a large number of granite columns placed at regular intervals in the wall; this shows, of course, that it was not erected until after the columns had become part of Sidon's ancient ruins; nevertheless, it is built of very heavy stones, and probably dates back to the beginning of our era. The slightly-pointed arch in the most ancient part does not prove it to be modern, for I have seen this kind of arch in buildings undoubtedly older than the Saracens.



KŬL'AT EL M'AZEH—CASTLE OF ST. LOUIS.

The old wall of the city extended along the shore towards the north-east to the little brook el Kumleh; from thence it is not easy to trace it for some distance; but it appears to have been carried southward along the terrace which rises above the general level of the plain, and thence westward to the sea, about twenty rods south of the present upper or land castle, called by the natives Kŭl'at el M'azeh. The top of the tell on which that castle, known in Crusading times by the name of St. Louis, stands is artificial, and, what is more remarkable, is made up, in a great measure, of old pottery, rubbish of houses, and thick beds of broken murex, thrown out from Sidon's ancient manufactories of purple dye. The bluff facing the sea above the crescent-shaped bay on the south shows this conglomeration at least twenty feet thick.

South-east of the upper castle is a muzâr, frequented mostly by Jews, and called Neby Sidûn. The people do not know who he was; and, if it were a shrine dedicated to old Sidon himself, there would be nothing strange in the fact that the Jews frequent it. So they do Neby Sîjud yonder, on the top of Jebel Rîhâh, and other places of the same character, although they are in the possession of the Moslems. Columns, sarcophagi, broken statuary, and other evidences of a large city are found everywhere in the gardens, with the oldest trees growing in fertile soil many feet thick above them. These are the most remarkable remnants of Sidon's original greatness which time has left us; they do not contradict her ancient renown, though they throw very little light upon her history.

Sidon has always clung to life with singular tenacity. Its history is older than that of Tyre alike in sacred, in classic, and in profane literature. It runs parallel with the march of time down the ceaseless current of human generations. Not so that of Tyre. Many centuries have passed away since continental Tyre sank beneath the burden of prophecy, and the very site of it has been lost; yet I found men still living when I first visited it who remembered where the wild-boar was roused from his lair amongst the thorns and thickets of insular Tyre. The political and social relations of the Sidonians with the Hebrews were less intimate than were those of Tyre, and hence Sidon does not figure so conspicuously in the Biblical narratives as her rival daughter does.

Sidon was the oldest city, "the mother of the Phœnicians," having been founded, according to Josephus, by Sidon, the eldest son of Canaan, the great-grandson of Noah.[1] Sidon is mentioned in Genesis, centuries before Tyre existed.[2] The territory of Sidon must have been understood to extend southward to the Bay of Acre, where alone the border of Zebulun could come in contact with it, as predicted by Jacob in his dying blessing upon his sons.[3] At the time of the Conquest, and the division of the Promised Land by Joshua, Sidon was the chief city of the Phœnicians, and is twice called "great Zidon."[4] In Judges Sidon has also the pre-

[1] Gen. x. 1, 6, 15; Ant. i. 6, 2. [2] Gen. x. 19. [3] Gen. xlix. 13. [4] Josh. xi. 8; xix. 28.

eminence, nor does Tyre supersede or eclipse it until the days of David, when Hiram entered into friendly relations with him, and especially with his son Solomon.[1] After that time, both in Biblical history and in the Prophets, Tyre becomes specially celebrated, and Sidon is almost forgotten. Its inhabitants appear to have become subservient to the Tyrians, for we read in 1 Kings and Ezra that the Sidonians were skilled in hewing and transporting the timber which Hiram, King of Tyre, sent to Solomon, and also that used in the building of the second Temple at Jerusalem.[2] Ezekiel says that "the inhabitants of Zidon" were the mariners of Tyre in his day.[3] Yet both were equally celebrated for their commerce, their luxury, and their vices, and both have sunk under "the burden of the word of the Lord, for the Lord hath spoken it."[4]

In classic literature the same priority is ascribed to Sidon which was at the first accorded to it in Biblical history. Tyre is not mentioned by Homer, but Sidon and the Sidonians are repeatedly referred to, and it is a pleasing corroboration of the Biblical account of the ancient greatness of Sidon to find her eminent in commerce and in art at the time of the Trojan war. Agamemnon, the "king of kings, and fierce Achilles" were proud to wear Sidonian purple, and fight their battles in her polished armor. And Homer's heroines also arrayed themselves in gorgeous robes,

> Which from soft Sidon youthful Paris bore,
> With Helen, touching on the Tyrian shore.

From Sidon came that

> Silver bowl, the largest of its kind,
> The pride of kings, and labor of a god.

And, if we may so judge from the story of Menelaus, in the fifteenth book of the Odyssey, the Sidonians were cunning workmen, if not crafty traders, in those olden times:

> A ship of Sidon anchor'd in our port,
> Freighted with toys of every sort—
> With gold and amber chains [etc., etc.]
> Each female eye the glittering links employ;
> They turn, review, and cheapen every toy.

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[1] Judges x. 6; xviii. 7, 28; 2 Sam. v. 11; 1 Kings v. 1.

[2] 1 Kings v. 6; Ezra iii. 7.

[3] Ezek. xxvii. 8.

[4] Joel iii. 4; Zech. ix. 2.

And the treacherous heroine of the story, "A fair Phœnician, tall, full-sized, and skilled in works of elegance," was from this city:

I too from glorious Sidon came,
Famous for wealth by dyeing earn'd.

If such was Sidon's fame before Troy was burnt or Homer sang, it not only may but must have been "great" when Joshua conquered at "the waters of Merom."

Sidon participated in many of the political revolutions which afflicted this country, and is mentioned in the history of the invasions and conquests of the Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, Egyptians, and Romans. It was especially celebrated for war-ships and naval enterprises. Sidon appears to have been quite destroyed in the thirteenth century B.C. by the Askalonites. In seven hundred and twenty the Sidonians joined Shalmaneser, King of Assyria, with their fleets against Tyre. Several centuries later Sidon was again destroyed by Artaxerxes Ochus, King of Persia, and forty thousand of the inhabitants are said to have perished. But it soon recovered, and on the approach of Alexander the Great it surrendered to him without a struggle. It submitted to the Egyptian monarchs, and afterwards to the Roman emperors, and appears never to have sunk so low as Tyre.

During the first centuries of our era Sidon continued in peaceful prosperity, and Christianity seems to have been established here quite early. Christ visited the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, but probably never entered either of them. The Apostle Paul, however, after he had "appealed unto Cesar," and while on his voyage to Rome, touched at Sidon, and "Julius courteously gave him liberty to go unto his friends to refresh himself."[1] After the conquest of Syria by the Muhammedans, and during the period of the Crusades, Sidon experienced all the vicissitudes of those troublous times. It was besieged and taken by Baldwin in A.D. 1111, but was retaken and partially destroyed in 1187, after the battle of Hattîn, by Saladin. Ten years later the Crusaders again got possession of it—only for a short time, however. The following century it was again taken and retaken by the Franks and the Saracens, and in

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[1] Acts xxvii. 3.

A.D. 1253 King Louis IX. of France repaired the walls, and rebuilt the present land castle, which has ever since borne his name.

Sidon was abandoned by the Knights Templars in 1291, and the place was again dismantled by the Muhammedans; it has remained in their possession ever since. A futile attempt was made by the Druse Emîr, Fakhr ed Dîn, to revive the commerce of Sidon; he built a palace for himself, and erected the large khân now known as Khân el Franj. French commercial houses were established here, and for a time the trade of Sidon, especially with Marseilles, was in a flourishing condition. But in 1791 Jezzâr Pasha drove the French merchants out of Sidon, and since then its small export trade has been in the hands of the natives. The proximity of Beirût has turned the tide of European commerce away from Sidon, and it is now only occasionally visited by foreign vessels and steamers. Still, even under the misrule of the Turk, Sidon enjoys a moderate degree of prosperity. Its gardens are the most flourishing and productive of any along this coast, and from them the chief support of a large portion of the inhabitants is derived.

What may be the population of the city and its gardens?

It is not possible to arrive at perfect accuracy, as there are no reliable statistics kept by the Government. The number of inhabitants is said to be about ten thousand. Of these, seven thousand are Moslems, including the Metâwileh, thirteen hundred Greek Catholics, one thousand Maronites, two hundred Greeks, and five hundred Jews. This is a small figure for a city so celebrated in ancient story. Nor is it likely to increase much for years to come.

Our pilgrimage through Palestine proper, the true Holy Land, ends at Sidon; to-morrow we will visit the city, and then ride through the gardens on our way to Beirût, where we will arrive in the evening. There we shall remain for some time, and I can assure you, in advance, of a cordial welcome from the Anglo-American community resident in that beautiful city. Like the Father of the Faithful, we have also walked "through the land in the length of it, and in the breadth of it," from Beersheba even to Dan, and we have visited "the coasts of Tyre and Sidon," and thus in numberless ways we have everywhere discovered that the Land illustrates and confirms the Book.

INDEX OF SCRIPTURE TEXTS ILLUSTRATED.

ARRANGED ACCORDING TO THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE.

GENESIS.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
iv.	20	253
vi.	14	527
x.	1, 6, 15	648
"	1, 6, 15–18	611
"	19	648
"	23	462
xi.	3	527
xii.	6	136
xiii.	7	276
xiv.	—	553
"	10	528
xv.	5	270
xviii.	7	436
xxiv.	22, 47	184
xxvi.	12	264
"	20, 21	276
xxviii.	11	92
"	19	93
xxxi.	40	438
xxxii.	10, 22	449
"	16	276
xxxiii.	—	163
"	16, 17	185
"	18	153
xxxiv.	—	137
"	20	137
xxxv.	—	25
"	1–4	137
"	27	27
xxxvi.	24	342
xxxvii.	12–14	169
"	18–20	168
"	24	30
"	24	169
"	33	170
xlii.	21	169
xlviii.	—	25
"	7	26
xlix.	5, 7	137
"	5–7	506
"	13	247
"	13	648
"	20	588
"	22	147
l.	25	148

EXODUS.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
ii.	3	452
"	3	528
x.	3–15	300
xii.	1–11	131
"	6	131
"	8, 11	132
"	10	132
xix.	4	535
"	18	568
xxi.	28–32	282
"	33, 34	282
"	34	283
"	35	282
xxii.	6	293

LEVITICUS.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
xi.	5, 6	258
"	22	301
xiii.	46	589
xxvi.	3, 5	550

NUMBERS.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
xii.	14	43
xxii.	4–16, 41	517
"	15, 16	555
xxiii.	1	517
xxiv.	17	38

DEUTERONOMY.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
iii.	9	623
"	13	435
"	13, 14	371
iv.	43	435
"	48	523
viii.	7	605
xi.	10	275
xiv.	7	258
xxv.	7–10	42
xxvii.	—	138
"	2–8	139
"	12, 13	138
"	15	138
xxviii.	—	138
"	23	262
"	24	262
"	39, 40	289

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
xxxii.	11, 12	535
“	13	259
“	13	591
xxxiii.	17	463
“	24, 25	588
xxxiv.	1	522

JOSHUA.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
iii.	16	162
“	16	461
vii.	2	93
“	24–26	190
viii.	—	138
“	12, 13	96
“	30–32	139
“	33–35	138
ix.	—	65
“	16, 21	84
x.	10	74
“	11–14	75
xi.	1–5	553
“	1–15	586
“	2	644
“	6–15	554
“	8	267
“	8	648
“	10, 11	506
“	13	263
xii.	7, 22	559
“	15	48
“	24	153
xiii.	5	610
“	6	267
xv.	8, 9	21
“	9	62
“	9, 60	61
“	35	48
“	51	50
“	60	62
xvi.	5	79
xvii.	—	191
“	11, 12	213
“	11, 16	194
“	14–18	99
“	16	191
“	16	208
xviii.	11, 13, 14	74
“	23	107
xviii.	25	67
“	25	78
xix.	—	588
“	12	324
“	12, 22	326
“	13	303
“	14, 27	302
“	15	270
“	18	199
“	21	172
“	27	251
“	27	294
“	28	596
“	28	648
“	29	267
“	29	620
“	29	627
“	32	277
“	34	281
“	34	410
“	34	466
“	35–39	586
“	36, 37	280
“	46–48	644
xx.	7	140
“	7	559
xxi.	21	140
“	22	74
“	27–29	172
“	28	324
“	32	559
xxii.	—	160
“	—	161
“	10	162
xxiv.	—	137
“	26	137
“	32	147

JUDGES.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
—	—	105
i.	22–26	97
“	27	194
“	31	216
“	31	245
“	31	267
“	31	547
ii.	13	644
iv.	2, 3	506
iv.	4, 5	78
“	4–10	324
“	5	222
“	6, 10, 15	559
“	11	217
“	11, 17, 21	559
“	14	214
v.	6, 7	223
“	10, 11	224
“	19	213
“	20	214
“	24–30	220
vi.	2, 3, 5	179
“	11–25	180
“	32	180
“	33	182
“	34, 35	181
vii.	1	179
“	1	200
“	1–7	179
“	1–14	181
“	3	181
“	15–23	183
“	22	155
“	22	182
“	22	184
“	24	184
“	24, 25	360
viii.	10	183
“	12, 18–21	179
ix.	6	137
“	7–21	141
“	7–23	84
“	50–56	164
x.	6	649
xvii.	—	38
xviii.	—	38
“	7	481
“	7, 28	649
“	7–31	554
“	9, 10	478
“	9, 10, 29	459
“	10	465
“	14, 30, 31	484
“	18–25	554
“	26–28	506
“	30	459
xix.	—	39
xix.–xxi.	—	106

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
xx.	—	39
xxi.	8–12	195
"	19	107
	RUTH.	
—	—	39
i.	—	39
"	15–17	39
ii.	4	40
"	14	40
"	23	40
iii.	6, 7	41
"	15	41
iv.	11	29
	1 SAMUEL.	
i.	19, 20	67
iii.	20	564
vi.	20, 21	62
vii.	1, 2	62
"	15–17	67
"	16, 17	77
viii.	11–18	52
ix.	—	27
"	5	60
"	15, 16	28
x.	—	27
"	2	28
"	2	50
xi.	1–11	195
xiii.	—	88
xiv.	2	89
"	4, 5	89
"	15	91
"	15	568
"	20	91
"	23	93
xvii.	—	20
"	28	45
"	34–36	45
"	34–37	594
"	40	405
xxi.	—	48
"	15	48
xxii.	1	48
"	5	252
xxiv.	14	388
xxv.	1	67
xxvi.	7, 8, 12	442

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
xxvi.	15, 16	443
"	20	388
xxviii.	3–25	203
"	4	200
"	7–25	204
"	20, 24, 25	204
xxxi.	1, 2, 8	200
	2 SAMUEL.	
i.	17–27	174
ii.	12–17	21
iv.	—	85
"	2, 3	84
"	9–12	85
v.	11	622
"	11	649
"	22–25	24
vi.	—	62
"	3, 4	62
x.	6–14	547
xiii.	37	462
xv.	12	50
xx.	1	544
"	8–10	71
"	15–22	546
xxiii.	—	30
xxiv.	4, 7	622
	1 KINGS.	
—	—	78
i.	3, 4	200
ii.	5, 6, 28–34	72
iii.	4–10	72
iv.	7, 12	195
"	12	185
"	12	213
"	13	371
"	15	282
"	32, 33	9
v.	1	649
"	1–12	622
"	6	649
"	18	610
vii.	13, 14	599
"	46	162
viii.	63	276
ix.	10–14	294
"	10–14, 26–28	622
"	15	213

Chapter.	Verse.	Page
ix.	26–28	625
x.	11–22	622
"	11–22	625
xi.	1–7	8
xii.	1, 19, 20	141
"	16	264
"	25–33	93
"	28–30	484
"	31	93
xiii.	—	98
"	33, 34	97
xiv.	17	154
xv.	16–22	79
"	20	459
"	20	530
"	20	546
"	21, 33	154
xvi.	6–23	154
"	23, 24	113
xvii.	1	225
"	8–24	634
xviii.	1	225
"	1–46	227
"	30	228
xix.	11	568
"	16	185
"	19	185
xx.	26–30	371
xxi.	—	188
xxii.	10	112
	2 KINGS.	
ii.	—	102
"	23, 24	98
iv.	8–10	200
"	8–10	634
"	9, 20	200
"	24–27	200
"	38–41	201
v.	27	120
vi.	8–18	171
vii.	—	120
"	3–11	121
"	3–17	155
viii.	—	201
ix.	—	188
"	17	187
"	24	187
"	25, 26	187

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
ix.	27	172
"	27	213
"	30	189
"	33	187
"	34–36	188
x.	—	120
"	18–28	506
"	18–28	518
"	32, 33	114
xiii.	21	273
xv.	14, 16	154
"	19, 20	114
"	29	114
"	29	132
"	29	459
"	29	530
"	29	546
"	29	560
"	29	586
xvii.	3, 5, 6, 20, 23	114
"	6	555
"	12–17	115
"	24–33	115
"	33	133
xviii.	9, 10	112
"	9, 10	132
xxiii.	29, 30	213

1 CHRONICLES.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
ii.	19, 50	29
"	51	29
v.	26	114
"	26	132
vi.	72	324
"	77	303
"	77	326
vii.	24	74
"	29	194
xiv.	13–17	24
xxvii.	25–31	281
"	28	288

2 CHRONICLES.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
vii.	13	300
viii.	1, 2	294
"	5	74
xi.	7	48
xiii.	19	107
xvi.	4	547

EZRA.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
—	—	85
ii.	26	79
iii.	7	625
"	7	649
iv.	1–6	116
"	14	361

NEHEMIAH.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
—	—	85
ii.	—	129
"	19, 20	116
iv.	—	129
vi.	—	129
vii.	29	62
"	30	79
xi.	30	48
xiii.	16	625

JOB.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
iii.	20, 21	640
v.	5	409
viii.	11	452
xiv.	19	469
xv.	2	262
xxvii.	8, 18	424
"	20, 21	425
xxx.	1	593
"	3, 4	290
"	7, 8	420
xxxix.	9–12	463
"	27–30	535
"	29	535
xl.	15, 19–22	461
"	23	461
"	23	462
xlii.	12	276

PSALMS.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
ix.	15	283
x.	8–10	243
"	9, 10	332
xi.	1	562
xviii.	—	47
"	7–16	508
xxii.	21	463
xxiii.	4	596
xxiv.	7, 9	476
xxxiv.	title	48
xxxiv.	3, 4	50
xxxv.	7, 8	283
lv.	6, 7	562
lix.	title, 6, 14, 15	593
lxii.	3	572
lxvi.	1, 2	497
lxviii.	13	562
lxix.	2, 14	423
lxxvi.	—	124
lxxx.	1	592
"	13	357
lxxxi.	—	259
"	5	645
"	16	591
lxxxiii.	14, 15	292
lxxxix.	12	198
cii.	6	450
ciii.	5	536
civ.	18	257
cix.	23	300
cxiv.	1	645
"	4, 6, 7	568
cxix.	130	474
"	176	595
cxxii.	6, 7	81
cxxxiii.	—	523
cxlviii.	7–13	484
"	8	529

PROVERBS.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
—	—	9
—	—	11
—	—	12
—	—	16
—	—	17
—	—	18
ii.	4, 5	641
vi.	6–11	283
"	10	285
"	25	190
xii.	27	285
xiii.	4	285
xv.	19	285
xviii.	9	285
xix.	12	14
xx.	4	285
"	8	14
xxi.	25, 26	285
xxii.	13	285

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
xxiv.	14	285
"	30, 31	286
"	31	420
xxv.	1	10
xxvi.	15	285
"	16	285
xxvii.	—	262
"	15, 16	261
xxx.	15	471
"	15, 18, 29–31	13
"	26	257
"	27	300
"	33	456
xxxi.	—	13

ECCLESIASTES.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
xi.	6	550

SOLOMON'S SONG.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
i.	7	21
"	15	563
ii.	1, 2, 16, 17	457
iv.	1	563
v.	12	563
vi.	4	153

ISAIAH.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
i.	3, 4	387
"	8	424
"	29	474
iv.	6	632
v.	1, 2	599
xi.	1	315
xviii.	2	452
xix.	7	452
xxii.	23	221
xxiii.	7	625
"	7, 8	608
"	8	624
"	9	608
"	9	625
"	12	620
xxv.	4	632
xxviii.	2	632
xxix.	1, 6	568
xxx.	13	572
xxxv.	2	237
xxxviii.	14	562
xl.	11	595
xlii.	15	558
lix.	11	562
lx.	8	561
lxiii.	—	600

JEREMIAH.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
ii.	13	585
iv.	3	410
"	30	190
vii.	12–14	105
"	31, 32	519
viii.	21, 22	170
xix.	5	518
xx.	14	174
xxiii.	5	315
xxvi.	20	61
xxxi.	15	28
xxxiii.	15	315
xxxvi.	22, 23	250
xli.	—	72
"	17	35
xlvi.	13, 18	326
"	18	237
xlviii.	28	561
xlix.	19	157
l.	44	157

EZEKIEL.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
vi.	13	326
"	13	474
vii.	16	561
"	16	562
viii.	14	609
xxiii.	40	190
xxvi.	3-5, 12	627
"	15–21	624
xxvii.	—	622
"	—	623
"	—	624
"	8	649
"	32	598
"	36	625
xxviii.	2	626
xxix.	18	627

DANIEL.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
ii.	34, 35	80

HOSEA.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
i.	4, 5	190
ii.	15	190
"	21–23	190
iv.	15	93
v.	1	326
"	8	93
x.	5	93
"	14	400

JOEL.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
i.	7	298
"	15, 16	299
"	18	299
ii.	3, 6, 7	299
"	9	299
iii.	4	649
"	4–8	622

AMOS.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
—	—	84
i.	1	568
"	2	100
"	2	238
"	9, 10	622
iii.	15	250
iv.	7, 8	341
ix.	2, 3	238
"	13	550

MICAH.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
i.	6	112
"	15	48
vi.	15	288
"	15	598
vii.	14	238
"	14	595

NAHUM.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
i.	4	100
"	10	292
ii.	7	562
iii.	17	299

HABAKKUK.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
iii.	10	632

ZEPHANIAH.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
ii.	9	420
"	13, 14	451

ZECHARIAH.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
iii.	8	315
vi.	12	315
ix.	2	649
x.	4	221
xii.	11	208
xiv.	5	568

MALACHI.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
iv.	1	291

MATTHEW.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
—	—	37
ii.	11	34
"	16–18	25
"	16–18	29
"	23	315
iii.	1–6	159
"	4	259
"	4	301
"	4	591
"	10	291
iv.	18–22	431
v.	13	361
"	14	564
vi.	30	291
vii.	6	356
"	6	357
viii.	—	411
"	14	430
"	20	411
"	23–27	352
"	24	333
"	28	354
"	28–34	338
ix.	1	420
"	1–13	430
"	9	377
x.	5, 6	122
"	9, 10	405
"	10	405
"	12, 13	581
xi.	20–25	420
"	21	626
"	23	420
xii.	1, 2	41
xiii.	24–30	395
"	31, 32	163
"	31, 32	453
xiii.	44	641
"	47, 48	348
xiv.	—	430
"	12	120
"	13, 15	393
"	13–33	351
"	34	393
xv.	9	566
"	21	626
"	21–28	635
"	39	394
xvi.	—	483
"	13–20	483
xvii.	—	327
"	—	483
"	1–13	523
"	24–27	378
xviii.	12	595
xix.	1	358
xxi.	1	8
xxiii.	23	566
"	24	388
xxiv.	7	573
"	14	373
"	15, 16	575
"	20	544
xxvii.	45, 50–52	569

MARK.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
i.	4, 5	159
"	17	348
ii.	1–12	433
"	1–17	430
"	14	377
"	23, 24	41
"	27	566
iv.	30–32	163
"	35–41	351
"	38–41	352
v.	1	354
"	1–20	338
"	20	358
vi.	—	430
"	8	405
"	31, 32, 35	393
"	37	393
"	53	393
vii.	7, 13	566
"	24–30	635
vii.	31	358
ix.	—	327
"	2–13	523
x.	1	358
xi.	1	8
xvi.	9	395

LUKE.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
i.	39	57
"	46–55	57
"	56	57
ii.	—	30
"	7	34
"	8, 9	45
"	41–49	86
iii.	3	159
iv.	16–30	400
"	25	225
"	25–29	635
"	27	120
"	28–30	317
v.	1–11	353
"	4–8	394
"	4–9	349
"	16–32	430
"	18–26	433
vi.	1, 2	41
vii.	1–10	419
"	11–18	205
"	13–15	207
viii.	22–26	352
"	26	354
"	26–40	338
"	43–48	482
ix.	—	327
"	—	430
"	3	405
'	10	393
"	10–17	351
"	28–36, 51	523
"	51–56	122
"	58	411
x.	4	406
"	5	581
"	7	407
"	19	479
xi.	11, 12	479
"	42	566
xii.	27	456

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
xiii.	6-9	101
"	18, 19	163
xv.	15, 16	356
xix.	29	8
xxiv.	50-52	6

JOHN.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
i.	28	184
"	43-51	304
"	43-51	311
"	44	413
ii.	1-11	304
iv.	—	146
"	1-43	150
"	9	121
"	12	150
"	20, 21, 24	130
"	35	150
"	35, 38	108
"	43-54	305
vi.	—	420
"	—	430
"	1-21	351
"	1-23	344
vi.	59	419
viii.	48	121
x.	4, 5	594
"	40	184
xi.	54	107
xx.	11-18	395
xxi.	1	344
"	2	304
"	6	349
"	7	349

ACTS.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
i.	6-11	6
v.	15	273
vii.	16	136
viii.	—	122
ix.	1, 2	449
x.	28	589
xii.	20-23	626
xix.	12	273
xxi.	7	245
"	3-7	627
xxii.	3	577
xxiii.	31, 33	74
xxiv.	5	316
xxvii.	3	650

GALATIANS.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
ii.	11-21	589

2 THESSALONIANS.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
i.	10	7

HEBREWS.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
—	—	124
vi.	4, 8	291
xi.	33, 34	553

2 PETER.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
ii.	22	358

REVELATION.

Chapter.	Verse.	Page.
ix.	5-10	479
xiv.	—	599
xvi.	16	213
xix.	—	600
xxi.	2, 27	19
"	19	584

INDEX OF NAMES AND SUBJECTS.

EXPLANATION OF TERMS USED.

'AIN, Hebrew EN, Fountain.
BÂB, Door or Gate.
BEIT, Hebrew BETH, House.
BELÂD, District.
BÎR, Hebrew BEER, Well or Cistern.
BIRKEH, BIRKET, Pool.
BURJ, Tower.
DEIR, Convent.
JEBEL, Mountain.
JISR, Bridge
KABR, Tomb.
KHÂN, Inn or Caravansary.
KHŬRBEH, KHURBET, Ruin.
KUL'AH, KŬL'AT, Castle.
MERJ, Plain or Meadow.
MUKÂM, Shrine or Saint's Tomb.
MUZÂR, Shrine or Saint's Tomb.
NÂBA', Fountain.
NAHR, River.
NEBY, Prophet.
RÂS, Head or Promontory.
TELL, Hill or Mound.
WADY, Valley or Watercourse.
WELY, Saint's Tomb.

AARON, 108, 418.
'Abdallah Pasha, 165, 239, 250, 268.
Abeih, 296, 299, 300, 389, 491, 493.
Abel-beth-maachah, 114, 459, 530, 544–546, 554.
Abel-meholah, 184, 185.
Abel-maim, 547.
Abéla, Mr., 570.
Abijah, 107.
Âbil el Kamh, 456, 530, 544–546, 552.
'Abilîn, 270, 275, 302.
Abimelech, see Achish.
Abimelech, 84, 140, 141, 164.
Abinadab, 62, 63.
Abishag, 200.
Abishai, 442, 443.
Abishua, 136.
Abner, 71, 442, 443.
Abraham, 27, 92–94, 123–127, 137, 205, 226, 270, 276, 386, 436, 437, 447, 487, 552, 553, 651.
Abraham's Oak, 104.
Absalom, 71, 462, 475.
Absalom's Tomb, 8.
Abu el Aswad, 631.
Abu Dîs, see Bethphage.
Abu Gaush, robber, 61, 64.
Abu Zabûra, 112, 423.
Acacia, 639.
Accho, see Acre.
Achabari, rock, 565.
Achan, 190.
Achilles, 649.
Achish, 48, 49.
Achor, valley, 190, 191.
Achzib, in Asher, 246, 247, 252, 257, 265, 267, 268, 430.
Achzib, in Judah, 48.
Acre, 111, 133, 172, 196, 207, 208, 210, 211, 215, 216, 231, 235, 237, 241–253, 265–268, 270, 274, 276, 280, 294, 302, 303, 305, 312, 321, 347, 372, 423, 495, 540, 551, 553, 554, 558, 568, 574, 609, 618, 619, 648.
Actipus, 246.
Actium, 568.
Adam, the city, 162, 461.
Adams, Mrs. S. F., 98.
Adana, 486.

'Adlân, 633.
Adonis, 481, 609.
Adrammelech, 115.
Adrian, emperor, 55.
Adullam, cave, 48, 49.
Adullam, city, 48–50.
'Adwân, Bedawîn Arabs, 156.
Ægean Sea, 623, 624.
Ælia Capitolina, 55.
Africa, 80, 480, 612, 623, 625.
'Afûleh, 207.
Agamemnon, 649.
Agate, 584.
Ahab, 112, 120, 155, 177, 187–189, 225, 227, 231, 232, 370, 518, 622.
Ahaziah, 172, 187, 210, 213.
Ahimaaz, 282.
Ahithophel, 50.
Ai, 93, 95, 96, 137.
'Aîd el Mîyeh, 48.
'Aiha, 513, 514.
'Ain 'Abûs, 108.
'Ain 'Askar, 145, 146, 150.
'Ain Ata, 575.
'Ain el Barîdeh, 346, 391, 392.
'Ain Defneh, 145.
'Ain Fît, 440, 488.
'Ain el Fûlîyeh, see 'Ain el Barîdeh.
'Ain el Hamâm, 407.
'Ain el Hanîyeh, 55, 56.
'Ain el Harâmîyeh, 101, 102.
'Ain Hâzûr, see En-hazor.
'Ain Hor, 255.
'Ain el Hufîreh, 168.
'Ain Hŭrsheh, 510.
'Ain Ibl, 585, 587.
'Ain Jalûd, see Jezreel, the fountain.
'Ain el Jân, 579.
'Ain Jenîn, 172.
'Ain el Kanterah, 635–637.
'Ain Kârim, 22, 57–59, 70.
'Ain el Kehâly, 565.
'Ain Kŭnyeh, 469.
'Ain el Mellâhah, 394, 453, 496, 552.
'Ain el Mudauwarah, 346, 407, 408.
'Ain Selukia, 440.
'Ain es Serâr, 407.
'Ain es Sultân, near Ba'albek, 530.
'Ain es Sultân, see Elisha's Fountain.
'Ain et Tâbighah, 346, 408, 413–416, 429.
'Ain et Tîny, 293, 346, 391, 408, 411, 412, 413, 415, 426, 428, 429, 435, 452.
'Ain Yebrûd, 100, 101.
'Ainjar, 531.
'Ainûn, 153.
Ajalon, valley, 74, 76.
Akabah, Gulf of, 446, 447, 625.
'Akabet Z'atera, 108.
'Akîl Aga, 167, 192, 302, 329–332, 426.
'Akka, see Acre.
'Akkar, plain, 610.
Aklîm esh Shummâr, 246.
Akr'a, Jebel el, see Casius, Mount.
Aleppo, 142, 262, 362, 537, 559.
Alexander the Great, 116, 129, 130, 265, 616, 618, 625, 627–629, 639, 650.
Alexandria, 236, 409.
Alexandroschene, 265, 266.
Alford, Dean, 151.
'Ali, son-in-law of Muhammed, 486, 487, 555, 588, 631.
'Alîa, 259.
'Allîyeh, see Guest-chamber.
Allon, in Naphtali, 259.
'Alma, in Asher, 255, 257, 261, 263, 266.
'Alma, in Naphtali, 563.
Almond, 70, 189.
Altar, 11, 93, 98, 113, 124–127, 130, 160–162, 180, 226, 228, 239, 272, 459, 474, 517, 518.
'Aly es Sŭghîr, Beit, 588.
Amalekites, 179, 210.
Amasa, 71, 72.
Amatha, hot springs, see Humma, el.
America, American, 61, 80, 145, 197, 205, 255, 433, 454, 644, 651.
Ammarîyeh, el, 255.
Ammaus, hot springs, see Hammath.
Ammonites, 72, 195, 547, 624.
Amorites, 74, 76, 506, 523, 551, 553.
'Amûd Hŭmsîn, 254, 255.
Anah, 342.
Anammelech, 115.
'Anâta, 79.
Anath, 223.
Anathoth, 63.
Anderson, Captain S., R.E., 126, 148–150, 168, 169.
Andrew, the Apostle, 373, 413, 423, 431.
Aner, 553.
Anglo-American, 651.

Anna, mother of Mary, 308, 309.
Ant, 283–285, 397.
Antaradus, 610.
Antigonus, 625.
Anti-Lebanon, 446, 458, 522, 589.
Antioch, 423, 485, 486, 564, 589.
Antoninus, M. A., 638.
Antony, Marc, 569.
Aphek, see Fîk.
Apocrypha, 11, 20, 94, 195, 208, 245.
Apollo, 642.
Apostles' Creed, 80, 82.
Apple, 100, 110, 526.
Apricot, 110.
Aqueduct, 46, 252, 253, 266, 268, 340, 413–415, 429, 604–606, 629, 637, 638.
Arabah, 447.
Arabia, Arabians, 111, 173, 187, 301, 303, 347, 439, 462, 518, 522, 549, 551, 584, 612, 624.
Arabian Nights' Entertainments, 51, 369.
Arabic, 11–16, 24, 29, 30, 63, 76, 111, 113, 146, 147, 173, 187, 191, 195, 197, 203, 216, 251, 252, 263, 286, 291, 303, 355, 356, 389, 395, 397, 401, 452, 459, 463, 477, 508, 525, 528, 632, 634, 642.
Arabs, Bedawîn, 10–12, 15, 16, 45, 73, 145, 150, 156, 157, 166, 167, 170, 172, 175, 179, 182–184, 192–194, 197, 199, 205, 207, 208, 210, 217–221, 223, 224, 229, 243, 252, 253, 255, 263, 264, 278, 295, 301, 312, 313, 328, 329–332, 334, 347, 359–361, 363, 364, 367, 369, 370, 389, 405, 421, 422, 435–444, 448, 450, 451, 454–456, 463, 471, 473, 492, 506, 527, 543, 563, 579, 641.
Arabs, native, 10–16, 20, 21, 22, 42, 51, 73, 92, 102, 104, 105, 111, 143, 160, 181, 194, 197, 198, 202, 203, 234, 236, 252, 253, 263, 264, 278–281, 290–293, 347–349, 353, 356, 360, 369, 370, 387–389, 394, 396, 404, 405, 412, 416, 417, 424, 426, 430, 433, 434, 442, 445, 465, 471, 474, 475, 518, 519, 523, 526–529, 534, 542–544, 547, 559, 597, 621, 627, 631, 632, 640–642, 651.
'Arak, 51.
Aram, 462.
Arbela, see Irbid.
Arbutus, 132.
Arca, 537.
Arcadia, 480.
Arculfus, 150, 392.
Argob, 371.
Ariel, 568.
Ark of the Covenant, 53, 62, 63, 103, 138, 460.
Ark of bulrushes, 528.
Arka, Arkites, 487, 538, 610.
Armageddon, 213.
Armenia, Armenians, 32, 33, 46, 623, 624.
Arms, 88, 89, 91, 111, 243, 325, 357, 359, 363, 405, 441–444, 454, 471, 492, 504, 505, 578, 579.
Arnon, 114.
'Arnûn, 540.
Aroer, 114.
'Arrâbeh, 166, 280, 306.
Arrian, 625.
Artaxerxes, Ochus, 650.
Arvad, Arvadites, 610, 619, 623.
Asa, 78, 79, 113.
'Asafia, el, 233, 237.
Ashdod, 56.
Asher, 138, 180, 183, 245–247, 251, 267, 294, 302, 506, 537, 538, 547, 551, 582, 586–588, 596, 597, 599, 620, 622.
Ashima, 115.
Ashmanezer, 644, 645.
Ashur, 624.
Asia, 80, 182, 239, 517.
Asia-Minor, 612.
Askelon, 146, 174, 175, 631, 650.
Asphaltitis, lake, 158.
Asphaltum, 527.
Assassins, 488.
Assyria, Assyrian, 112–116, 132, 133, 210, 230, 356, 515, 516, 530, 546, 560, 586, 609, 650.
Astarte, Ashtaroth, 598, 617, 629, 644.
Astyrius, 482.
'Atara, Ataroth-addar, 79.
'Athlît, 241.
Attar of roses, 53.
Attic, 516.
'Attîl, 168.
'Aujeh, el, river, 101, 423.
'Aulâm, 329.
Auranitis, see Haurân, el.
Auwaly, el, Nahr, 609, 611.
Auwerta, 108.
Ava, Avites, 115.
'Azariyat, el, 466.
Azekah, 74.

Baal, 63, 113, 120, 180, 224–227, 230, 231, 480, 488, 499. 505, 511, 514, 517, 518, 598, 644.
Baal-gad, 480.
Baalah, 62.
Ba'albek, 522, 530, 551, 595.
Baanah, 85.
Baasha, 78, 79.
Bâb el Hâd, 499.
Babeer, see Papyrus.
Babel, Tower of, 527.
Babylon, Babylonian, 62, 79, 85, 94, 113, 115, 132, 133, 157, 175, 305, 326, 465, 518, 527, 639.
Bagdad, 249, 537.
Bahjeh, 250, 268.
Ba'ineh, el, 275.
Bakhshîsh, 91, 307, 363, 544.
Balaam, 43, 517, 555.
Balak, 517, 555.
Baldwin, 265, 353, 650.
Balm, 170, 171, 624.
Baltic, 612.
Balû'a, el, 71.
Bâniâs, 353, 356, 359, 413, 434, 435, 440, 448, 453, 457, 467–470, 473, 477, 478, 480–485, 488, 491, 519, 523, 540, 547, 548, 552, 560.
Bâniâsy, el, 447, 464, 466, 473, 552.
Barada, el, see Pharphar.
Barak, 210, 213–215, 222, 224, 225, 324, 326, 559, 560, 580, 586.
Barbarossa, Frederic, 614.
Bar-cochba, 54, 55, 583.
Barley, 24, 40, 41, 45, 73, 108, 181, 182, 209, 281, 303, 395, 464, 525.
Barracks, 145, 617.
Baruch, 425, 426.
Bashan, 99, 100, 114, 153, 196, 241, 476, 495, 522, 525, 551, 565, 591, 595, 623.
Baths, 252, 334–336, 340–342, 345, 346, 352, 392, 573.
Batîhah, el, plain, 360, 393, 422, 424, 426, 430, 435, 439, 440, 442.
Batrûn, el, see Botrys.
Battista, Giovanni, Padre, 239.
Bay-tree, 257, 533.
Bear, 45, 98, 156, 170, 332, 357, 450, 520, 603.
Beder ed Dîn, 549.
Bee-eater, 154, 372.
Beer-lahai-roi, 94.
Beer-sheba, 94, 125, 554, 599, 651.
Beeroth, see el Bîreh.
Bees, Bee-hives, 159, 199, 259, 268, 299, 301, 306, 329, 464, 465, 478, 481, 485, 591.
Beetle, 301.
Beg, 555–557, 588.
Behemoth, 461–463.
Beirût, 31, 144, 236, 331, 348, 490, 503, 556, 569, 574, 584, 593, 609, 610, 613, 617, 618, 628, 630, 651.
Beisân, 157, 158, 163, 165, 168, 173, 174, 184–187, 191–197, 208, 209, 213, 312, 313, 334, 338, 358, 372.
Beit 'Abd el Hâdy, 166, 167.
Beit Hanîna, 21, 79.
Beit Jâla, 27, 29, 50–54.
Beit Jerrâr, 166, 167.
Beit Jibrîn, see Eleutheropolis.
Beit Lahm, see Bethlehem.
Beit Lahm, 223, 270.
Beit er Râs, 337, 359.
Beit Sâhûr, 45.
Beit Unia, 70.
Beita, 108.
Beitîn, see Bethel.
Belâd Beshârah, 341, 587, 588, 604, 628.
Belâd er Rôhâh, 167.
Belâd esh Shŭkîf, 246.
Belâd et Tuffâh, 246.
Belât, 257, 530, 534, 535, 537.
Belât in Asher, 587.
Belât in the Hûleh, 552.
Belâta, 146, 149.
Beldeh, 610.
Belfort, Castle of, see Kŭl'at esh Shŭkîf.
Belka, el, 156.
Belus, river, 244.
Belus, temple, 617.
Benaiah, 72.
Benhadad, 78, 121, 155, 370, 371, 459, 530, 546.
Benjamin, 25, 27, 28, 39, 59, 71, 74, 77–79, 84, 105, 107, 114, 116, 138, 195, 544.
Benjamin of Tudela, 560, 563.
Beriah, 74.
Berjah, 287.
Beth-anath, see 'Ain Ata.
Beth-arbel, see Irbid.
Beth-aven, 93, 97, 98.

Beth-barah, 184.
Beth-emek, 246, 251.
Beth-gan, 172.
Beth-horon, Nether, 74, 76.
Beth-horon, Upper, 73–76.
Beth-rehob, 547.
Beth-shean, see Beisân.
Beth-shemesh, 62, 63.
Beth-shittah, see Shŭttah.
Bethabara, 184.
Bethany, 5, 6, 8, 322.
Bethel, 65, 67, 77, 78, 84, 88, 91–98, 100, 102, 107, 115, 128, 190, 222, 272, 459.
Bether, see Tell Bittîr.
Bethlehem, 19, 24, 25, 28–49, 51, 53, 58, 124, 272, 520, 553.
Bethlehem of Zebulon, see Beit Lahm.
Bethphage, 8.
Bethsaida, 343, 351, 378, 379, 392, 393, 413, 422, 423, 430, 441, 626.
Bethulia, 165.
Bibars, Sultân, 312.
Bichri, 71, 544, 546.
Bint Jebeil, 246, 575, 588.
Bîr, see Cisterns.
Bîr Nebâla, 70.
Bird, Rev. Isaac, 61.
Bîreh, el, 50, 61, 65, 76, 79, 83–88, 100.
Birkeh, see Pools.
Birket Aly edh Dhâher, 414, 415.
Birket el Jish, 574.
Birket er Râm, see Phiala, lake.
Birweh, el, 270.
Bitumen, 527, 528.
Blight, 288–290.
Boar, 156, 243, 295, 305, 355–357, 426, 441, 450, 454, 603, 630, 648.
Boat, "ship," 164, 242, 267, 268, 333, 339, 340, 343, 347–349, 351–353, 359, 364, 372–376, 380, 391–394, 411, 430, 431, 450–452, 472, 529, 570, 613, 617, 631, 636, 646.
Boaz, 29, 39–43, 46.
Bohemian, 144.
Bonar, Dr. Andrew, 77, 149.
Booths, 132, 478.
Bostrynus, see Auwaly, el.
Botrys, 609, 610.
Bottles, leathern, 65, 223, 322, 439, 442, 443, 456, 465.
Bouillon, Godfrey de, 311.
Bozez, 89.
Bozrah, 600.
Breccia, 47.
Bricks, 465, 527.
Bridge, 61, 162–164, 192, 195, 196, 212, 265, 266, 332–336, 338–340, 435, 439, 441, 445, 448, 449, 453, 457, 469, 470, 493, 507, 508, 531–534, 542, 546, 557, 584, 629, 632, 637, 646.
Brocardus, 239.
Brusa, 143, 424.
Buccinum, 619.
Buffaloes, 367, 424, 456, 461–464, 478, 555.
Bŭkâ'a, 97, 446, 447, 496, 503, 522, 531, 537, 584, 589.
Bulbul, 143, 154, 306.
Bunsen, Chevalier, 643, 644.
Bunyan, 454.
Buraij, 464.
Burckhardt, 183, 293, 301, 364, 371, 398, 424, 444, 514, 515, 632.
Burj, el, 92.
Burj Beitîn, 92.
Burj el Musheîrifeh, 247.
Burka, 79.
Burkush, 519.
Bussah, el, 252, 253, 255.
Bŭttauf, el, 225, 294, 295, 302, 303, 305–307, 321.
Butter, 143, 220, 221, 301, 456, 464, 465, 526.
Byblus, 609, 610.
Byzantine, 602.

CABUL, 246, 294.
Cactus, see Prickly-pear.
Cadiz, 625.
Cæsar, 31, 35, 116, 117, 378, 426, 463, 481, 482, 569, 650.
Cæsarea Palestina, 74, 111, 112, 173, 224, 228, 231, 237, 241, 242, 245, 248, 410, 423, 476, 482, 631.
Cæsarea Philippi, see Bâniâs.
Cairo, 134.
Caleb, 29.
Calf, golden, 459, 464, 484, 554.
Calhoun, Dr. S. H., 149.
Callirrhoe, 342.
Camel, 10, 11, 15, 51, 73, 74, 144, 179, 198, 207, 364, 365, 367, 438, 579, 632.
Canaan, Canaanite, 29, 137, 153, 158, 191,

210, 213, 214, 216, 219, 266, 274, 289, 326, 447, 461, 487, 506, 517, 518, 553, 608–611, 620, 635, 648.
Cana of Galilee, 295, 303–306, 378.
Cane, 410, 449, 451, 452, 454, 455, 461, 462, 554.
Canneh, 624.
Capernaum, 305, 343, 351–353, 377, 378, 392, 401, 411, 413, 416–423, 428–430, 432, 433, 446.
Capharcotia, 168, 173.
Capharnaum, Fountain of, 407, 409, 413, 416, 428, 429.
Capitolias, see Beit er Râs.
Captivity, captives, 62, 79, 85, 94, 113, 115, 123, 124, 132, 133.
Caravans, 34–36, 65, 73, 86, 155, 185, 194, 412, 436, 624.
Carmel, 100, 111, 167, 173, 177, 183, 197, 200, 201, 208, 209, 211, 214–216, 224–234, 236–243, 245, 251, 287, 302, 308, 320, 321, 325, 326, 476, 495, 522, 553, 565, 595, 609, 611.
Carob-tree, see Kharnûb.
Carthage, 625.
Casius, Mount, 584, 609, 611.
Cassius, Dio, 55.
Castellum, see Kŭstŭl, el.
Castle, 73, 100, 125–129, 162, 173, 178, 187, 207, 216, 235, 243, 248, 250–252, 255–257, 265, 267, 274, 280, 302, 303, 307, 309, 317, 321, 325, 328, 329, 353, 367, 412, 449, 469, 476–478, 487, 539–541, 543, 547–549, 555–558, 564, 565, 590, 613, 629, 638, 646–648, 651.
Cathedral at Cologne, 37.
Cathedral at Tyre, 614–616.
Cattle, 11, 35, 51, 63, 145, 150, 167, 179, 185, 186, 198, 203, 204, 205, 208, 233, 253, 264, 274, 275, 282, 299, 306, 334, 387, 404, 417, 437, 439, 442, 461, 463, 464, 484, 526, 529, 532, 558, 569, 603, 631, 632.
Cave of the Invention, see Cross, true.
Caverns, 23, 33–36, 45, 46, 48, 49, 58, 64, 70, 186, 203, 204, 239, 240, 255, 267, 293, 295, 376, 397–399, 480, 481, 521, 532, 561, 565, 642.
Cedar, 9, 32, 65, 484, 595, 610, 622–625, 629.
Cendivia, lake, 244.
Centipede, 389.
Chabolo, 294.
Chalcedony, 583, 584.
Chaldea, Chaldees, 37, 137, 447, 487.
Chalmers, Dr., 383, 384.
Chapel of the Burning Bush, 272.
Charcoal, 99, 471, 628.
Charey′-yonim, 121.
Chariots, 52, 65, 155, 171, 172, 191, 210, 214–217, 220, 221, 227, 336, 553, 640.
Château Neuf, see Hûnîn.
Chedorlaomer, 528, 553.
Cheese, 143, 404, 526, 585.
Chephirah, 61, 66.
Chilmad, 624.
Chimham, 35.
Chinneroth, see Tiberias, city.
Chittim, 623.
Chorazin, 343, 378, 401, 413, 419, 421, 422, 626.
Chozeba, 55.
Christians, 27, 30, 43, 79, 83, 100, 122, 134, 135, 143, 145, 147, 195, 197, 203, 229, 248, 250, 260, 302, 311, 312, 316, 326, 333, 345, 361, 398, 406, 445, 492, 501–506, 513, 568, 588, 590, 596, 603, 626, 627, 650, 651.
Christmas, 31.
Chromis, fish, 394.
Chrysostom, 462.
Church, 7, 8, 30, 32–34, 45, 56, 58, 63, 64, 69, 81, 83, 84, 86, 87, 92, 94, 95, 100, 104, 111, 118, 119, 125–127, 144, 150, 240, 302, 306–309, 311–314, 316, 318, 322–325, 345, 368, 375, 376, 379, 402, 418, 419, 488, 494, 501, 503, 514, 538, 540, 570, 574, 575, 596, 602, 603, 614–616, 634, 635.
Church of the Annunciation, Nazareth, 312, 314, 316, 318, 322, 323.
Church of St. Catherine, Bethlehem, 33.
Church of St. Christopher, near Hiram's tomb, 602, 603.
Church of St. George, Jufna, 100.
Church of St. Jeremiah, Kuryet el 'Enab, 63, 64, 150.
Church of St. John, 'Ain Kârim, 58.
Church of St. John, Samaria, 111, 118–120.
Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem, 32–34.
Church of St. Peter, Tiberias, 345, 375, 376.
Church of the Virgin, Jerusalem, 8.
Circassia, Circassians, 623.
Cisterns, 30, 64, 84, 88, 102, 104, 105, 112, 125–127, ×150, 152, 168, 169, 194, 196, 253,

× Jacob's Well.

274–276, 282, 283, 286, 288, 294, 295, 304, 306, 318, 325, 368, 401, 402, 436, 444, 445, 447, 540, 557, 558, 575, 585, 586, 597, 599.
Citron, 132, 143.
City of Solomon, 9, 47.
Cloud-burst, 507, 632.
Cœlesyria, 97, 537, 551.
Cœur de Lion, Richard, 302.
Coffee, 144, 293, 334, 364, 436, 556.
Colocynth, 202.
Colony, German, 236.
Conder, Captain C. R., R.E., 50, 54, 69, 76, 89, 96, 146, 149, 150, 160, 161, 195, 196, 213, 236, 568.
Conquest by Joshua, 137, 140, 160, 210, 263, 648.
Constantine, 32, 311.
Constantinople, 144, 490, 593.
Consul, 51, 370, 490, 491, 503, 570, 628.
Convent, Deir, 19, 22, 23, 25, 30, 32–34, 36, 46, 58, 61, 82, 236–241, 302, 312, 317–320, 325, 376, 488, 494, 495.
Convent of the Cross, see Deir el Musŭllabeh.
Cony, 257–259, 265.
Coracinus, fish, 407, 409, 416, 429.
Coral, 47.
Corinthian architecture, 32, 56, 104, 119, 127, 193, 212, 336, 368, 402, 418, 513, 575.
Corn, parched, 40, 41.
Cornelius, Centurion, 589.
Cotton, 41, 145, 209, 525, 526.
Councils, Ecclesiastical, 122.
Cranes, 441.
Crib, see Manger.
Crier, public, 140, 141.
Crocodile, Crocodile River, 242, 423.
Cross, true, 23.
Crows, 279, 454, 455.
Crusades, Crusaders, 23, 25, 47, 63, 69, 84, 95, 118, 122, 144, 150, 173, 195, 207, 210, 236, 237, 239, 241, 244, 248, 251, 255, 257, 265, 302, 303, 308, 309, 311, 312, 325, 326, 329, 353, 376, 402, 403, 449, 476, 477, 483, 539, 540, 547–549, 557, 560, 564, 614, 618, 626, 629, 634, 638, 650, 651.
Cucumbers, 154, 166, 202, 424–426, 526.
Custom-house, 429, 430, 448.
Cuth, Cuthah, 115.
Cyclopean, 335, 597.
Cydessa, Cydessus, 560.
Cyprus, 361, 362, 623.
Cyprus-tree, 159.
Cyrus, 625.

Daberath, see ed Debûrieh.
Dahar, ed, "ridge," 446, 447, 492, 493, 503, 507, 509, 510, 527, 531.
Damascus, 31, 99, 120, 121, 134, 144, 145, 175, 201, 236, 357, 370, 412, 423, 429, 441, 444, 448, 477, 478, 491, 514, 522, 534, 537, 553, 562, 593, 624.
Dâmieh, ed, ford, 154–157, 160, 162–164.
Dâmôn, 275.
Dâmûr, ed, Nahr, see Tamyras.
Dan, Danites, see Tell el Kâdy.
Daniel, 37.
Daoud Aga, 334.
Daphne, see Difneh.
Dates, see Palm.
David, 9, 19, 24, 30, 39, 45, 47–50, 71, 72, 85, 141, 173, 174, 187, 200, 210, 243, 252, 257, 281, 283, 288, 292, 300, 315, 332, 388, 405, 423, 442–444, 462, 520, 537, 544, 546, 547, 568, 594, 600, 622, 637, 649.
Dead Sea, 45, 47, 68, 95, 99, 120, 124, 159, 160, 164, 289, 325, 339, 342, 362, 391, 393, 447, 459–461, 467, 522, 527.
Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, 92.
Deborah, the prophetess, 78, 214, 215, 218, 220, 222–224, 324, 326, 559, 560, 586.
Debûrieh, ed, 207, 209–211, 324.
Decapolis, 118, 332, 356, 358, 372, 379.
Dedan, 623, 625.
Deer, 441, 603.
Deir, ed, 575.
Deir 'Agâsûn, 108.
Deir el As'ad, 275.
Deir el 'Ashâyir, 514, 516, 519.
Deir Dîwân, 79, 107.
Deir Hanna, 280, 306.
Deir Mâr Eliâs, near Bethlehem, 25.
Deir Mâr Elyâs, see Carmel.
Deir Mîmâs, 287, 539, 543.
Deir el Musŭllabeh, 19, 22, 53.
Deir Mŭtâleîh, 494–496.
Delhumiyeh, ed, 335.
Delta, 241, 630.
Deluge, 527.
Der 'Ala, 163.

Derb es Sîn, 638.
Derdârah, ed, 454, 530, 545, 552.
Dew, 174, 175, 225, 238, 241, 271, 403, 523.
Dhâher 'Abûd, 264.
Dhâher el Omar, 251, 280, 303, 414–416.
Diab, Arabs, 334, 360, 372.
Dibs, grape sirup, see Vine, Vineyards.
Dib-yonim, 121.
Dietrich, Professor, 643.
Difneh, 464, 465.
Dilb, 585, 587.
Diligence, 64.
Dinah, 137.
Diocæsarea, see Seffûrieh.
Dion, 359.
Dius, 617, 628.
Divan, 556, 557.
Divorce, see under Manners and Customs, Marriage and Rejoicing.
Dog River, 609.
Dogs, 11, 13, 183, 189, 252, 285, 330, 357, 388, 438, 455, 493, 526, 543, 544, 593–595, 603.
Dome of the Rock, 127.
Donkeys, 11, 28, 51, 52, 59, 65, 73, 125, 156, 198, 200, 224, 281, 306, 334, 387, 388, 404, 420, 437, 443, 494, 526, 542–544, 579, 583, 584, 632.
Dor, 216, 224, 241, 247, 266, 554, 644.
Doric, 368.
Dothan, 30, 167–171, 201, 445.
Douseh, 518.
Dove, 154, 306, 397, 454, 561–563.
Downs, sand hills, 232, 243, 247.
Drake, Mr. C. F. Tyrwhitt, 70, 161, 236.
Druses, 218, 229, 233, 238, 250, 280, 302, 312, 336, 385, 406, 473, 486–488, 492, 500-505, 513, 543, 626, 651.
Ducks, 391, 454, 471.
Dufferin, Lord, 505.
Dŭhy, Jebel ed, see Hermon, Little.

Eagles, 532, 534–537, 561, 565, 575.
Ear-rings, see under Manners and Customs, Garments and Sleeping.
Earthquake, 22, 149, 290, 371, 446, 510, 527, 564–575, 584, 641.
East, the, see Orient, Oriental.
Ebal, Mount, 138–140, 145, 146, 148, 151–153, 164.
Ebed, 141.
Ecdippa, see Achzib in Asher.
Ed, Altar of Witness, 160–162.
Eden, 624.
Edom, 156, 600.
Eglon, 218.
Egypt, Egyptian, 18, 26, 27, 35–37, 43, 46, 51, 66, 88, 99, 139, 147, 155, 157, 168, 170, 189, 193, 196, 210, 233, 244, 245, 247, 248, 262, 267, 275, 300, 301, 312, 326, 357, 368, 379, 412, 452, 463, 465, 528, 535, 584, 604, 609, 614, 623, 624, 626, 628, 643, 645, 650.
Ehud, 218.
Elâh, see Terebinth.
Elah, valley, 19, 45, 50.
Eleazar, son of Aaron, 108.
Elephant, 463, 603.
Eleutheropolis, 48.
Eleutherus, 610.
Eli, 103, 106.
Eliab, 45.
Eliezer of Damascus, 437.
Elijah, 25, 97, 102, 115, 120, 185, 187, 188, 200, 224–233, 237, 240, 241, 273, 343, 568, 634, 635.
Elimelech, 39.
Eliphaz, 262.
Elisabeth, mother of John, 57, 58.
Elisha, 97, 102, 115, 120, 158, 171, 185, 200, 201, 273, 634.
Elisha's Fountain, 157, 158, 160.
Elisha's Tomb, 120.
Elishah, "the isles of," 623.
Elkanah, 67.
Emîr, 165, 281, 299, 312, 436–439, 444, 489, 491, 492, 501, 502, 513, 526, 651.
Emîr Beshîr Shehab, 165.
Emîr Hussein el Fŭdle, 436, 437, 439, 443, 444.
Emîr Sa'ad ed Din, 489.
Emmaus, see Kŭlônieh.
En-dor, Arabic Endôr, 191, 203–205, 209, 211, 212, 324.
En-ganim, see Jenîn.
En-hazor, 280.
England, English, 51, 61, 197, 202, 248, 302, 312, 313, 355, 370, 452, 463, 490, 500, 505, 579, 612, 625, 632, 643, 651.
Enon, 153.
Ephraim, 78, 99, 128, 140, 360.

Ephraim, Mount, 38, 78, 98, 99, 222, 546.
Ephraim, town, see Taiyibeh, et.
Ephratah, see Bethlehem.
Esau, 163, 185.
Esdraelon, 31, 116, 153, 166, 167, 172, 173, 175, 177, 181, 183, 191, 199, 203, 207–217, 219, 221, 222, 224, 225, 237, 241, 242, 302, 309, 312, 313, 317, 320, 324, 372, 525, 553, 559, 586.
Eschol, 553.
Esther's Tomb, 580.
Ethbaal, 518, 622.
Ethiopian, 55, 56.
Euphrates, 94, 276, 465, 537, 624.
Europe, European, 51, 80, 134, 144, 236, 239, 288, 361, 364, 375, 385, 395, 433, 489, 490, 502, 505, 537, 612, 625, 626, 644, 651.
Eusebius, 76, 86, 94, 150, 184, 248, 311, 324, 327, 329, 333, 482, 483, 560, 596, 614–616.
Eusebius's Tomb, 34.
Exodus, The, 131, 132.
Eyes, Eyebrows, painted, 188–190.
Eyries, 534–536.
Ezekiel, 622–625.
Ezion-geber, 625.
Ezra, 116, 132.

Faba, castle, 207.
Fair, 329, 333, 334, 379, 494, 525, 526, 623, 624.
Fakhr ed Dîn, 312, 651.
Fâkû'ah, Jebel, 173.
Fâlik, Nahr, 423.
Famine, 201, 233, 290.
Faran, Mr., 51.
Fauwâr ed Deir, 610.
Fauwâr, Neb'a el, 492, 499, 506–509, 552.
Female Educational Society, 313.
Ferns, 102.
Ferrâdy, el, 277.
Fig, 30, 50, 51, 61, 70, 99–102, 110, 141, 199, 209, 236, 294, 298 299, 313, 329, 380, 409, 412, 457, 500, 526, 533, 602.
Fîk, 370, 371, 430.
Firmân, 526, 543.
Fish, Fishing, 9, 186, 347–349, 353, 373–375, 378, 380, 391–394, 402, 403, 406–409, 414, 416, 423, 429, 431, 453, 481, 485, 529, 530, 602, 603, 625, 627, 630.
Flea, 388, 389, 543, 557.
Flocks, 21, 35, 45, 87, 92, 94, 107, 111, 149, 163, 167–169, 198, 207, 210, 238, 252, 266, 271, 275, 276, 278, 281, 299, 316, 330, 332, 339, 436, 437, 439, 440, 444, 460, 470, 471, 478, 481, 484, 489, 526, 532, 591–596, 645.
Flowers, 53, 108, 198, 271, 290, 327, 340, 394, 456, 457, 469, 602, 603, 637.
Fog, 66.
Ford, 332, 334, 423, 424, 449.
Fountain, 30, 46, 56, 64, 69, 70, 79, 83, 92, 101, 104, 110, 112, 116, 143, 145, 146, 149, 165, 168, 172, 178, 179, 184–188, 193, 198, 199, 207, 210, 223, 225, 230, 232–234, 252, 265–267, 274–278, 289, 304, 308, 309, 313, 315, 317, 321–323, 328, 329, 333–336, 340, 346, 359, 379, 391–394, 400, 404, 408, 409, 412–416, 421, 424, 428, 429, 436, 439, 440, 453, 457, 459, 467–469, 472, 473, 477, 480–483, 485, 489, 492, 496, 499, 506–509, 528, 530, 531, 552–555, 558, 560, 565, 579, 583, 590, 601, 604–607, 616, 618, 619, 621, 628, 636, 637.
Fountain of the Annunciation, Nazareth, 313, 315, 317, 321–323.
Foxes, 223, 284, 357, 411, 426, 450.
France, French, 144, 207, 210, 239, 245, 267, 312, 331, 490, 644, 645, 651.
Frogs, 471.
Fuleh, el, 199, 207, 210, 312.
Fulîyeh, el, 296, 391–393.

Gaal, 141.
Gabala, see Jebeleh.
Gabara, see Kŭbarah.
Gabinius, 116, 338, 358.
Gad, Gadites, 110, 114, 138, 161.
Gad, the prophet, 252.
Gadara, Gadarenes, Gadaritis, 333–338, 342, 354, 358, 372.
Galilee, Galilean, 6, 114, 116, 124, 151, 153, 166, 173, 177, 208, 211, 213–215, 224, 233, 241, 242, 247, 251, 257, 265, 271, 274–278, 294, 295, 303–306, 308, 311, 316, 344, 355, 358, 372, 379, 400, 401, 403, 404, 406, 413, 417, 423, 426, 439, 473, 522, 530, 551, 565 574, 576, 582, 583, 611.
Galilee, sea of, see Tiberias, lake.
Gamala, 295, 353, 359, 364–370, 400, 583.
Gamaliel, 577.

Ganneau, C. Clermont, Mr., 50.
Gate of city, 17, 30, 42, 61, 74, 112, 113, 118, 121, 137, 193, 224, 249, 250, 268, 367, 387, 469, 470, 476, 554.
Gath, 48, 174.
Gaulonitis, see Jaulân, el.
Gaza, 55, 68, 134, 175, 608.
Gazelle, 10, 185, 224, 330, 441, 450, 457, 630, 632.
Geba, see Jeb'a.
Gebal, Giblites, see Jebeil.
Gehazi, 120, 200, 201, 273.
Gennesaret, plain, 281, 293, 351, 391, 393–395, 403, 404, 407–410, 413–416, 424, 428–430.
Gennesaret, sea of, see Tiberias, lake.
Georgia, Georgians, 23, 623, 624.
Gerasa, see Jerash.
Gergesa, Gergesenes, 343, 353-356, 358, 359, 372, 411.
Gerizim, Mount, 84, 97, 108, 110, 122–132, 138–140, 146, 148, 151–153, 495.
German, Germany, 236, 463, 495, 534, 541, 544.
Gersa, see Gergesa.
Geshur, Geshurites, 462, 546, 547, 552.
Gether, 462.
Ghabsîyeh, el, 253.
Ghauârineh, Arabs, 455, 464, 465.
Ghôr, el, see Jordan.
Ghŭjar, el, 485, 552.
Giants, valley of, see Rephaim.
Gibbon, Edward, 320.
Gibeah, "the hill," 62, 63.
Gibeah, see Jeb'a.
Gibeah, of Saul, 28, 76, 77.
Gibeon, Gibeonites, 50, 61, 63, 65–67, 69, 70–74, 76, 77, 84, 107.
Gibraltar, Strait of, 612.
Gideon, 140, 155, 177, 179–185, 199, 205, 210, 326, 360.
Gilboa, Mount, 173–175, 177, 185, 194, 198, 200, 204, 208–210, 214, 320.
Gilead, 20, 68, 99, 114, 153, 155, 170, 476, 495, 522, 525, 530, 551, 563, 565, 592, 595.
Gilgal, near Jericho, 67, 77, 190.
Gilgal, near Bethel, 102, 201.
Giloh, Gilonite, 50.
Ginea, 172.
Ginnabris, 158.
Giscala, see Jish, el.
Gittiam, 84.
Glass, 244.
Gnats, 388, 389.
Goats, 11, 13, 21, 51, 52, 111, 160, 186, 198, 253, 264, 275, 299, 306, 334, 359, 387, 397, 405, 437, 444, 456, 481, 489, 508, 532, 535, 563, 591, 593, 595, 603, 624, 632, 637.
Golan, 435, 441; see also Jaulân, el.
Goldfinch, 154, 453.
Goliath, 20, 50, 187.
Gophna, see Jufna, el.
Gorgias, 48.
Gospel of the Infancy; and of Nicodemus, 314.
Gourd, 201–203.
Gozan, river, 555.
Grapes, see Vine, Vineyards.
Grasshoppers, 179, 180, 182, 210, 296–298, 302.
Greek, Greeks, ancient, 20, 92, 95, 126, 191, 210, 236, 326, 338, 356, 372, 378, 479–481, 495, 499, 575, 602, 603, 608, 609, 612, 620, 622-626, 629, 650.
Greek, Greeks, native, 22, 25, 32, 34, 45, 46, 51, 100, 145, 172, 259, 280, 302, 313, 317, 319, 322, 325, 385, 402, 490, 501, 596, 640, 651.
Greek inscription, 255, 480, 499, 510, 513, 514, 522, 602, 603, 633, 638.
Greek language, 22, 117, 159, 354, 436, 645.
Grotto of the Nativity, Bethlehem, 33, 34, 45.
Guest-chamber, 34, 35, 200, 634, 636.
Guido, King of Jerusalem, 244.
Gush Halab, 574; see, also, Jish, el.
Gypsies, 156.

Habor, 555.
Hachilah, 442.
Hacket, Professor, 578.
Hadîtheh, el, 329.
Haifa, 196, 197, 211, 214, 231, 234–237, 241–243, 250, 302, 320, 331, 347.
Hajr Mûsa, 47.
Halah, 554, 555.
Hamah, Hebrew Hamath, 115, 485–487, 494, 496, 522, 537.
Hammath, hot springs, 340, 341, 345.
Hamlet, 34.
Hamilton, Captain, A. C.; R. E., 414.
Hamor, 136, 147.

Hanâwieh, el, 600, 601.
Hannah, mother of Samuel, 67, 103, 106.
Haran, 624.
Harbor, 234, 236, 241, 242, 247–250, 333, 608, 612–614, 617, 627, 635, 638, 645, 646.
Hare, 258, 603.
Harêm, 360, 443, 556.
Hareth, 252.
Harod, the well, 178.
Harosheth of the Gentiles, see Tell Harothieh.
Hasbâny, el, Nahr, 447, 454, 457, 463, 464, 485, 493, 494, 496, 501, 503, 506–509, 530, 539, 542, 552.
Hâsbeiya, 262, 329, 357, 477, 488–494, 499–510, 519, 528, 529, 531, 534, 541–543, 552, 558.
Hattîn, see Kŭrûn Hattîn.
Haurân, el, 164, 190, 336, 351, 372, 439, 448, 494, 502, 522, 525, 526, 529, 551, 553, 628.
Hawâra, 108.
Hawks, 266, 455, 471, 561.
Hazael, 114.
Hazîreh, see Hazor.
Hazor, 114, 216, 217, 263, 265, 473, 506, 530, 554, 585, 586.
Hebard, Mr., 149.
Heber, Bishop, 34.
Heber, the Kenite, 217, 219, 220, 559, 563, 586.
Hebrew, Jewish, 9, 11, 13, 25, 37, 47, 55, 85, 103, 105, 135, 256, 259, 274, 309, 325, 326, 559, 599.
Hebrew language, 9, 23, 24, 30, 62, 63, 67, 71, 90, 113, 121, 146, 201–203, 213, 216, 221, 251, 252, 258, 262, 263, 315, 356, 420, 452, 456, 459, 461, 463, 475, 527, 528, 546, 561, 565, 584, 608, 632, 634, 645.
Hebrew Inscriptions, 147, 581, 645.
Hebrews, Jews, 6, 11–13, 26–29, 34, 36, 37, 42, 52, 54, 55, 63, 65, 67, 68, 70, 71, 74–76, 78, 85, 88, 91, 97, 99, 103, 106, 107, 110, 112–116, 120–122, 124, 129, 132, 133, 137, 138, 141, 145, 147, 152, 153, 155, 158, 162, 171, 173, 174, 177, 179, 180–182, 190, 191, 195, 200, 204, 209, 210, 213, 214, 216, 219, 221, 222, 224–227, 229–233, 243, 247, 250, 259, 262–264, 267, 270, 272, 275, 281, 282, 290, 294, 301, 302, 304, 309, 311, 316, 319, 333, 344–346, 356, 358, 361, 365–369, 371, 377, 378, 381, 385–388, 406, 407, 419, 426, 428–430, 435, 457–461, 474, 506, 517–519, 523, 528, 535, 537, 544–546, 554, 558, 560, 561, 563, 565–569, 571, 574, 577–580, 582, 583, 586–589, 591, 611, 620–623, 625, 627, 630, 635, 641, 648, 651.
Hebron, 20, 27, 47, 50, 57, 85, 90, 94, 123, 144, 170, 217, 272, 549.
Hedjaz, 301.
Heiromax, see Jarmuk, el, Nahr.
Helbon, 624.
Helena, mother of Constantine, 23, 32, 239, 266, 376.
Helena, Troy, 649, 650.
Helex ianthina, 619.
Helkath-hazzurim, 71.
Henderson, Mr., of Park, 538.
Hercules, temple of, 617, 629.
Hermits, 239, 316.
Hermon, Little, 173, 177, 197–199, 203, 207–209, 212, 320.
Hermon, Mount, 99, 153, 164, 197, 233, 241, 289, 321, 326, 336, 337, 343, 346, 351, 403, 435, 438, 446, 458, 471, 476, 478, 480, 484, 485, 488–491, 493–499, 505, 507, 509–514, 518–523, 534, 538–540, 547, 551–553, 565, 623.
Herod Agrippa I., 626; II., 482.
Herod Antipas, 341, 344, 345, 392.
Herod the Great, 29, 34, 116–118, 120, 141, 397–400, 481, 510, 568.
Herodias, 120.
Herodotus, 284, 285, 618.
Hibbârîyeh, temple at, 489, 493, 494, 497–500, 507, 509.
Highland, Scotland, 167.
Hillel, Rabbi, grandfather of Gamaliel, 577.
Hinnom, valley of, 21, 519.
Hippopotamus, 258, 259.
Hippos, see Semakh, es.
Hiram, artificer, 599.
Hiram, King, 65, 294, 600, 605.
Hiram's Tomb, 600–602.
Hittites, 97, 155, 553.
Hivites, 65, 70, 553.
Holland, Mr., 632.
Holmes, Mr., 149.
Holy City, see Jerusalem.
Holy Family, 30–38.
Holy Land, 99, 110, 122, 162, 239, 245, 248.

403, 449, 457, 458, 522, 534, 554, 599, 638, 648, 651.
Holy Sepulchre, 34.
Homer, 247, 539, 620, 649, 650.
Honey, 159, 259, 301, 306, 329, 456, 464, 465, 485, 526, 591, 624.
Horatio, 34.
Horeb, 99, 568.
Horses, 11, 21, 43, 51, 52, 55, 73, 74, 91, 95, 102, 106, 155, 171, 187, 198, 208, 215, 216, 225, 231, 232, 234, 241, 242, 256, 268, 283, 295, 296, 302, 303, 306, 323–325, 334, 359, 360, 363, 375, 420, 421, 423, 439, 441, 452, 471, 476, 478, 485, 486, 489, 491, 492, 526, 532, 534, 542–544, 553, 558, 560, 564, 579, 599, 603, 623, 631, 640.
Houses, native, 8, 35, 42, 43, 63, 69, 73, 75, 82, 84–89, 91, 92, 102, 142, 143, 165, 167, 169, 193, 199, 200, 203, 209, 221, 236, 249, 250, 252, 261, 264, 294, 299, 306, 313, 329, 362, 371, 379, 394, 417, 432–434, 451, 455, 478, 500, 502, 513, 518, 528, 542–544, 546, 547, 566, 568–574, 581, 627, 634, 636.
Hukkok, 281, 410.
Hŭkŭb, 565.
Hul, 462.
Hûleh, el, lake, marsh, and plain, 123, 216, 266, 281, 356, 357, 394, 410, 423, 435–437, 439, 446–462, 464–467, 478, 485, 489, 492, 495, 496, 506, 509, 522, 525, 529, 530, 546–548, 551–554, 559, 564, 586, 644, 650.
Huly Lily, 456, 457.
Hummah, el, hot springs, 333–336.
Hŭmra, el, 265.
Hums, 244.
Hûnîn, 246, 542–544, 547–549, 551, 555, 557, 558.
Hur, 29.
Husks, see Kharnûb.
Huzzab, 562.
Hyenas, 441, 450.
Hyrcanus, John, 116, 130.

IBL EL HAWA, 494, 539.
Ibrahim, Nahr, 609.
Ibrahim Pasha, 43, 46, 61, 66, 73, 88, 193, 248, 267, 342, 500, 559, 574.
Idjzîm, 231.
Ijon, see Merj 'Ayûn.
Iksâl, 209, 211, 212.
India, 284, 584, 612, 624, 625.
Inn, see Khân.
Ionic, 368, 402, 419, 499, 510–512, 516.
Irbid, 397, 398, 400–402, 419.
Ireland, 625.
Iris, 456.
Iron, see Yârôn.
Isaac, 27, 123–127, 226, 264.
Ish-bosheth, 71, 85.
Ishmaelite, 170, 179, 180, 184, 208, 437.
Israel, Israelites, see Hebrews, Jews.
Issachar, 138, 172, 181, 191, 199, 213, 324, 326.
Italy, Italian, 481, 612, 613.
Ivory, 623.

JABAL, 253.
Jabbok, see Zerka, ez.
Jabesh-gilead, 194, 195, 197.
Jabin, 216–219, 221, 266, 473, 553, 554, 586.
Jackals, 223, 295, 357, 403, 426, 450, 493.
Jacob, 25–27, 29, 92, 93, 98, 100, 133, 137, 141, 145–150, 153, 163, 169, 170, 185, 226, 247, 248, 272, 276, 438, 445, 446, 449, 465, 506, 568, 588, 635, 648.
Jacob's Daughters, 222, 445, 474.
Jacob's Well, 108, 121, 130, 133, 145, 146, 148–151, 322.
Jaddua, high-priest, 129.
Jael, 217–224, 559, 560, 586.
Jaffa, 19, 63–65, 70, 73, 75, 100, 101, 144, 153, 167, 232, 236, 331, 410, 423, 505, 522, 578, 613, 618, 625, 644.
James, the Apostle, 121, 327, 373, 431.
James, King of England, 14.
Jâmi'a el Arba'în, 103, 104.
Jâmi'a ed Dâim, 104, 106.
Jamnia, 583.
Jâmûsieh, el, see Gamala.
Jân, evil spirits, 222, 369, 370, 474, 579, 580, 640.
Janoah, 114, 530.
Jarmuk, el, Nahr, 192, 333, 335, 336, 338, 342, 354, 363, 435, 438, 446.
Jars, 56, 64, 75, 92, 182, 198, 206, 286–288, 304, 306, 313, 315, 322, 323, 328, 442, 443, 465, 558, 588.
Jasher, book of, 75.
Jasper, 584.
Jaulân, el, 351, 353, 359, 435–444, 446, 448, 450, 471, 529, 547.

Javan, 623–625.
Jeb'a, 76–79, 87, 89, 151, 165.
Jeba'a, 590, 637.
Jebbûl, 362.
Jebeil, 481, 609, 610, 623.
Jebel ed Derûze, 336.
Jebel esh Sheikh, see Hermon.
Jebel Usdum, 362.
Jebeleh, 486, 611.
Jebusites, 9, 506, 553.
Jefât, see Jotapata.
Jehoiakim, 250.
Jehonathan, 281.
Jehoram, Joram, 187, 189.
Jehoshaphat, 112, 155.
Jehovah, 11, 93, 94, 115, 124.
Jehu, 120, 172, 177, 187, 188, 190, 210, 213, 505, 518.
Jeîdah, 223.
Jelbôn, 173, 210.
Jenîn, 151, 154, 165–168, 172, 173, 175, 181, 208–210, 213, 224, 313.
Jerash, 118, 359.
Jerba, 166.
Jeremiah, 61, 104, 105, 170, 425.
Jericho, 8, 77, 78, 93, 96, 102, 157–160, 170, 322, 340, 399, 460, 461, 467, 522, 563.
Jerjû'a, 637, 638.
Jermŭk, Jebel, 153, 403, 495, 565, 579.
Jeroboam, 84, 91, 93, 97, 107, 132, 141, 459, 484.
Jerome, 50, 59, 76, 94, 97, 123, 150, 197, 248, 311, 324, 327, 329, 560, 574, 596.
Jerome's Tomb, 34.
Jerubbaal, 180.
Jerusalem, 5, 6, 8, 9, 16–20, 24, 25, 28, 34, 37, 38, 46, 47, 51, 53, 55, 59, 61–66, 68, 71, 74, 76–82, 84, 86–88, 100, 101, 107, 113, 121, 123–125, 127, 129, 130, 132, 133, 138, 142, 143, 153, 156, 164, 166, 167, 172, 175, 222, 244, 245, 248, 272, 311, 314, 322, 345, 365, 367, 369, 379, 410, 448, 459, 477, 506, 518, 519, 523, 528, 549, 553, 577, 583, 601, 625, 626.
Jeshanah, 107.
Jesse, 315, 332, 544.
Jesus—the ancestry of, 39.
Jesus—the Ascension, 6, 80, 82.
Jesus—the baptism of, 457, 460, 563.
Jesus—from Bethany to Jerusalem, 51, 322.
Jesus—the birth of, 30, 31, 33–38, 45, 57, 80, 428, 618.
Jesus—at Cana of Galilee, 304, 305.
Jesus—at Capernaum, 413, 419, 420, 428–434.
Jesus—at Cesarea Philippi, 482, 483.
Jesus—the death and resurrection of, 80, 82, 122, 125, 206, 316, 319, 376, 382, 395, 428, 528, 569.
Jesus—in Decapolis, 358.
Jesus—the Good Shepherd, 594–596.
Jesus—in Galilee, 270, 271, 274, 291, 308, 358, 378–387, 456, 581, 626, 641.
Jesus—incident in the early life of, 86, 314.
Jesus—at Jacob's Well, 130, 133, 145, 146, 150, 151, 322.
Jesus—from Jericho to Jerusalem, 8, 322.
Jesus—at Jerusalem, 573–575.
Jesus—"a Man of Sorrows," 25.
Jesus—at Nain, 205–207.
Jesus—at Nazareth, 86, 309, 311, 314–323, 381, 400.
Jesus—at the Sea of Galilee, 271, 333, 343, 348, 349, 351–356, 358, 372–384, 391–397, 404–407, 411, 413, 419–421, 426–434, 573.
Jesus—the Sermon on the Mount, 343, 356, 361–363, 381, 402, 411, 456, 564.
Jesus—not in the city of Tiberias, 344, 378.
Jesus—the Transfiguration, 323, 325, 327, 343, 523.
Jesus—visits the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, 626, 635, 650, 651.
Jether, 71.
Jezebel, 25, 113, 120, 177, 187–189, 225, 226, 228, 518, 622.
Jezreel, 168, 173, 175, 177, 178, 180–182, 184, 185, 187, 188, 190, 197, 198, 201, 209, 212, 225, 227, 231, 232.
Jezreel, the fountain of, 178, 179, 181, 184–188, 197.
Jezreel, the valley of, 155, 174, 177–184, 186–188, 190–194, 196–200, 204, 208, 210, 212–214, 506.
Jezzar, el, Pasha, 251–253, 312, 540, 651.
Jezzîn, 531.
Jîb, el, see Gibeon.
Jiljîlia, see Gilgal, near Bethel.
Jimzu, 66.
Jiphthah-el, 245, 302.

Jish, el, 22, 446, 561, 570, 571, 574, 576.
Jisr Benât Ya'kôb, 435, 439, 441, 445, 447–449, 453, 546.
Jisr Bŭrghŭz, 531.
Jisr el Ghŭjar, 457.
Jisr el Ka'ka'îyeh, 557.
Jisr el Kŭr'ûn, 493, 531, 584.
Jisr el Mejâmi'a, 164, 192, 329, 334–336, 338, 448.
Jisr Um el Kanâtir, 332, 339, 340.
Joab, 71, 72, 544–547, 622.
Joachim, father of Mary, 308, 309.
Joaiza, 436–439.
Joash, overseer, 288.
Job, 174, 276, 409, 438, 461, 462, 465, 645.
John, the Apostle, 37, 121, 213, 327, 343, 344, 373, 374, 431, 584, 599.
John, the Baptist, 57, 58, 111, 118–120, 153, 159, 184, 259, 291, 301, 392, 591.
John the Baptist's Tomb, 118–120.
John, St., Knights of, 118, 119, 248.
Jonathan, 89, 90, 173, 174, 568.
Jordan, 67, 68, 73, 77, 88, 95, 98, 99, 114, 118, 123, 145, 153–164, 166–168, 172, 177, 182–185, 187, 191–194, 196, 197, 201, 208, 210–212, 223, 233, 241, 264, 289, 290, 293, 313, 322, 325, 327–330, 332–335, 338–340, 346, 347, 358, 360, 363, 370–372, 379, 394, 411, 413, 416, 421–423, 426, 430, 435, 439, 440, 445–451, 453, 454, 457–464, 466–469, 475, 478, 480–485, 489, 493, 495, 506–509, 514, 522, 523, 534, 539, 542, 546, 550, 552, 553, 559, 565, 624.
Joseph, 26, 30, 97–99, 138, 140, 146, 147, 167–170, 191, 444–446.
Joseph, husband of Mary, 30, 31, 35, 57, 86.
Joseph's Tomb, 145–148, 150.
Josephus, 20, 24, 28, 29, 39, 55, 77, 94, 100, 116, 120, 124, 125, 129, 130, 157–159, 165, 172, 173, 182, 195, 208, 214, 220, 221–223, 245, 246, 259, 270, 275, 277, 280, 282, 294, 295, 306, 308, 311, 324, 333, 338, 341, 344, 345, 358, 365–368, 372, 381, 395, 397, 398, 400, 407–409, 413, 416, 423, 426, 428, 430, 436, 459, 464, 473, 480, 481, 510, 537, 553, 560, 568, 574, 576, 577, 586, 608, 620, 621, 628, 648.
Joshua, 65, 70, 74, 76, 84, 95, 96–98, 103, 126, 133, 137–140, 152, 153, 158, 161, 210, 216, 245–248, 263, 266, 326, 466, 480, 487, 506, 553, 554, 559, 586, 620, 622, 626, 627, 631, 648, 650.
Josiah, 210, 213, 519.
Jotapata, 275, 294, 295, 365, 577, 582, 583.
Jotham, 84, 140, 141.
Jubb Jenîn, 531, 584.
Jubbâta, 491.
Juda, town, 57.
Judah, 20, 28, 50, 57, 59–61, 78, 84, 107, 112–114, 132, 138, 153, 172, 217, 281, 410, 466, 467, 563, 568, 622, 623.
Judea, 6, 31, 32, 100, 116, 133, 151, 228, 305, 379, 569.
Judeideh, 539.
Judith, book of, 165, 208.
Jufna, el, 100.
Julian, 483.
Julias, Bethsaida, 423, 426.
Jûn 'Akkâr, 610.
Jûne, 362.
Jupiter Olympus, temple of, 617.
Justin II., 602.
Justinian, 127.
Juttah, see Yŭtta.

Kabîreh, el, 252, 268.
Kabr Hairân, see Hiram's Tomb.
Kabr Neby Hŭzzûr, 585, 586.
Kabr Yûsuf, see Joseph's Tomb.
Kabûl, 270, 275, 294, 295, 306.
Kadisha, el, Nahr, 610.
Kalley, R., Dr., 230.
Kâmid el Lauz, 97.
Kâna, 246, 591, 596, 598–600.
Kâna el Jelîl, see Cana of Galilee.
Kanah of Asher, see Kâna.
Kanah, river, 423.
Karmathians, 487.
Kâsim, 629.
Kâsimîyeh, el, Nahr, 246, 629, 630.
Kaukab el Hawa, 192, 329.
Kaukaba, 527.
Kauzih, 585, 587.
Kawayir, 371.
Kebir, el, see Eleutherus.
Kedar, 624.
Kedes, 114, 214, 217, 222, 417, 450, 462, 530, 557, 559–561, 563, 586.
Kedesh Naphtali, see Kedes.
Keffîyeh, 198.

Kefîr, see Chephirah.
Kefr 'Anân, 277.
Kefr Bir'im, 265, 401, 417, 575, 580-583, 587.
Kefr Hâbûr, 499.
Kefr Hârib, 371.
Kefr Kenna, 304, 305, 307, 573.
Kefr Kîly, 529, 543.
Kefr Kŭlîn, 108.
Kefr Milkeh, 637.
Kefr Neffakh, 440.
Kefr Shûba, 489, 552.
Kefr Silwân, see Siloam.
Kefr et Tûr, 6, 7.
Keilah, see Kila.
Kenite, Kenites, 217–220, 559, 563, 565, 586.
Kennicott, 139.
Kenrick, J., Mr., 628, 629.
Kerak, 192, 333.
Kerak, Kir Moab, 264.
Khân, Manzûl, 31, 34–36, 59, 61, 83, 84, 102, 106, 107, 144, 177, 194, 195, 212–214, 237, 266, 327–329, 332, 334, 371, 375, 410, 412, 413, 415, 428–430, 444–446, 448, 494, 499, 503, 507, 509, 525, 629, 632, 633, 636, 638, 651.
Khân el Ahmar, 194.
Khân el Bûrak, 636.
Khân el Franj, 651.
Khân Hâsbeiya, 329, 494, 499, 503, 507, 509.
Khân Jubb Yûsuf, 444–446.
Khân el Kâsimîyeh, 629, 630.
Khân Khaiserân, 633.
Khân el Lejjûn, 212–214.
Khân el Lubbân, 106, 107.
Khân Minyeh, 410, 412, 413, 415, 428-430, 444, 565.
Khân en Nâkûrah, 266.
Khân es Sanîk, 638.
Khân es Sâwieh, 107.
Khân et Tujjâr, 327–329, 332, 334, 412.
Kharnûb, 96, 294.
Khiyam, el, 494, 529, 538, 539, 552.
Khlât Bey, 500.
Khŭdr Abu 'Abbas, 633, 634.
Khueizîba, el, 55.
Khŭlwât el Biyad, 488, 500.
Khuraibeh, el, 586.
Khŭrbet el Arba'in, 441.
Khŭrbet Hâzzûr, 277,
Khŭrbet Kâna, see Cana of Galilee.
Khŭrbet el Kenîseh, 152.
Khŭrbet Louzah, 128.
Khŭrbet Minyeh, 415.
Khŭrbet Mŭkhatâr, 94.
Khŭrbet Saida, 441.
Khŭrbet Sellâmeh, see Selamis.
Khŭrbet esh Sheikh Mudhkûr, 48, 50.
Khŭrbet esh Shwoizerîyeh, 253.
Khŭrbet es Sŭmrah, 371.
Khŭrbet Yedma, 330.
Khŭrbet el Yehûd, 54.
Khureibeh, el, 357, 489, 529.
Khŭtweh, el, 536, 537, 554.
Kibleh, south, praying-niche, 69, 104, 127, 147, 402, 419, 514.
Kidron, valley of, 8.
Kila, 48.
Kine, 463.
King's Dale, 124.
Kirjath-baal, 62, 63.
Kirjath-jearim, 50, 61–65, 150.
Kishon, 172, 208–218, 221, 227, 230–234, 237, 241–243, 245, 321, 423, 609.
Kitchner, H. H., Lieutenant, R. E., 407, 415, 416, 444–446, 476, 548, 560, 574–576, 579, 614.
Kitto, Dr., 218, 249.
Kleber, General, 207, 312.
Korân, el, 15.
Koulon, see Kŭlônieh, el.
Kŭbalân, 108.
Kŭbarah, el, 275, 306.
Kŭbâtîyeh, el, 166, 167.
Kŭlâ'ât, el, 542.
Kŭl'at Bustra, 488.
Kŭl'at ed Dubbah, 557.
Kŭl'at el Hŭsn, see Gamala.
Kŭl'at Ibn Ma'an, 397–399.
Kŭl'at Jedîn, 251, 252.
Kŭl'at Jendal, 519.
Kŭl'at Kureîn, 255–257.
Kŭl'at el M'azeh, 638, 647, 648, 651.
Kŭl'at Shem'a, 251, 265.
Kŭl'at esh Shŭkîf, 477, 537, 539–541.
Kŭl'at es Subeibeh, 473, 476–478, 519.
Kŭlônieh, el, 21, 59.
Kumleh, el, Nahr, 647.
Kuneitirah, 441.
Kûrah, el, 585.
Kurds, Kurdish, 334, 435.

Kurein el Jerâdeh, 370.
Kuriet el 'Enab, see Kirjath-jearim.
Kŭrn, el, Nahr, 247.
Kŭrn Sŭrtabeh, 154, 160–162, 336.
Kŭrûn Hattín, 207, 237, 277, 308, 312, 391, 400-404, 446, 549, 564, 626, 650.
Kŭskŭs, el, 223.
Kŭsr 'Atra, 449.
Kusr Bardwîl, 353.
Kussah, see Achzib in Judah.
Kŭstŭl, el, 59, 60.
Kuweh, el, 531–534.
Kûza, el, near Nâblus, 108; near Tyre, 255.

Ladder of Tyre, see Râs en Nâkûrah.
Lâdikîyeh, el, 486, 584, 611, 633.
Laish, see Tell el Kâdy.
Lamps, 182, 183.
Land of Promise, see Holy Land.
Lapwings, 534.
Lark, 154, 335, 343.
Larnaca, 362.
Latakia, see Lâdikîyeh, el.
Latin, Latins, 22, 32–34, 36, 46, 59, 61, 64, 100, 117, 202, 302, 312, 313, 318, 319, 325, 376, 402.
Latour d'Auvergne, Princesse, 7.
Leah, 27, 106.
Lebanon, Mount, 9, 31, 32, 35, 43, 90, 100, 101, 140, 153, 165, 167, 169, 233, 241, 289, 296, 302, 379, 404, 433, 446 458, 476, 481, 489, 490, 493, 495, 496, 502, 505, 507, 509, 522, 523, 531, 532, 534, 537, 551, 565, 589, 593, 595, 609–611, 623, 625, 629, 637, 641.
Leben, curdled milk, 205, 221, 448, 508, 526.
Lebonah, 107.
Leddân, el, Nahr, 447, 464, 552, 553.
Leeches, 471, 473.
Legio, Arabic el Lejjûn, see Megiddo.
Lemon, 132, 143, 199.
Lemuel, King, 13.
Lentisk-tree, 170.
Leopard, 305, 441, 450, 591, 594, 603.
Lepers, 120, 121, 155, 342, 400, 411.
Levi, Levites, 38, 39, 62, 63, 74, 78, 111, 137, 138, 140, 172, 195, 324.
Libnah, see Eleutheropolis.
Lifta, 19, 20–22, 66, 70.
Lilies, 380, 456, 457.
Linen, 623.
Lions, 11, 13, 14, 45, 98, 115, 156, 157, 170, 243, 285, 332, 510, 594, 603.
Lîtâny, el, Nahr, 447, 493, 503, 509, 530–539, 543, 554, 557, 587, 609, 629, 630.
Lizards, 11.
Locusts, 11, 259, 277, 290, 295–302, 389.
Lodge, "in a garden," 424, 425.
Lortet, M., 393, 598.
Lot, 94, 552.
Louis, St., King of France, 239, 651.
Louis, St., Castle of, 638, 647, 648, 651.
Louvre, le, 645.
Lûbieh, el, 403, 573.
Lud, 623.
Lupercalia, 481.
Luweizâny, el, Nahr, 485, 552.
Luynes, de, Duc, 644, 645.
Luz, 93, 97, 128.
Luza, see Khŭrbet Luzah.
Lycus, see Dog River.
Lydda, 75, 76.
Lynch, Lieutenant W. F., U.S.N., 331, 332, 339, 340.

Maacah, Mother of Absalom, 462.
Maachah, Maachathites, 546, 547, 552.
Macarius, Bishop, 23.
Maccabees, 48, 74, 116, 245, 400, 560.
MacGregor, Mr., 242, 450, 451.
Machærus, 120.
Machpelah, cave of, 27, 36.
M'adera, 329.
Magdala, see Mejdel, el.
Magi, 37, 38.
Magnificat, the, 57.
Mahanaim, 71.
Mahrakah, el, see Mŭhrakah, el.
Maize, 111, 209, 356, 357, 426, 464, 525.
Makhrûd, el, Jebel, 154.
Makhrûn, 92.
M'alia, 252, 259.
Mallows, 290, 291.
Malta Cross, 92, 119.
Mamre, 124, 552, 553.
Manasseh, 114, 161, 191, 194, 213, 435.
Manasseh, high-priest, 129, 130, 180, 183.
Mandrakes, 106.
Manger, 31, 33–36, 387, 462, 532.
Manna, 419, 420, 581, 582.

Manners and Customs:
  Amusements and Occupations, 21, 46–48, 51–53, 65, 85, 91, 104, 111, 113, 140, 144, 154, 156, 172, 185, 263, 264, 278–293, 305, 306, 325, 329, 335, 347–349, 351, 353, 363, 364, 373, 380–382, 404, 405, 409, 424–426, 437–439, 442, 444, 448, 455, 456, 471, 486, 487, 493, 525, 527, 549–551, 559, 599, 604, 611, 622–625, 631.
  Compliments and Hospitality, 40, 70, 177, 200–205, 219–221, 278, 334, 360, 363, 364, 375, 387, 405–407, 436, 441, 444, 500, 555–557, 626, 634, 635.
  Cooking and Eating, 40, 41, 52, 79, 121, 131, 132, 143, 171, 181, 182, 187, 194, 195, 201, 204, 205, 221, 227, 231, 244, 253, 276, 316, 356, 358, 360, 363, 379, 383, 392, 393, 395, 404, 420, 436, 441, 500, 508, 556–558, 588–590, 630, 634, 635.
  Covenants and Feuds, 85, 133, 167, 169, 205, 218, 223, 224, 282, 357, 360, 361, 363, 364, 407, 491, 492, 502–506.
  Funerals and Mourning, 25–29, 39, 67, 173, 174, 200, 206, 222, 379, 487, 526, 529, 562, 572, 590, 609.
  Garments and Sleeping, 41–43, 47, 51, 65, 72, 85, 125, 131, 132, 144, 172, 183, 188–190, 198, 200, 220, 222, 227, 232, 259–262, 272, 273, 276, 285, 317, 349, 364, 375, 379, 388, 404–406, 433, 439, 442, 443, 478, 500, 556, 557, 578, 579, 634.
  Harvest and Threshing, 41, 46, 52, 73, 85, 103, 108, 113, 150, 151, 175, 180, 183, 199, 200, 281, 284, 285, 293, 306, 307, 341, 380, 395–397, 409, 410, 449, 463–465, 469, 492, 530, 549–551, 642.
  Irrigation and Drawing Water, 14, 65, 92, 107, 146, 148, 149, 151, 154, 155, 157, 168, 172, 185, 196, 224, 275, 276, 283, 306, 313, 315, 322, 340, 341, 392, 407–409, 413–416, 428, 429, 464, 485, 530, 606, 629.
  Marriage and Rejoicing, 15, 27, 41–43, 105, 132, 188–190, 263, 305, 379, 443, 481, 526, 563, 578, 579, 580.
  Men and Women, 12, 13, 40–43, 46, 47, 52, 53, 89, 91, 92, 103, 104, 111, 131, 132, 164, 167, 174, 184, 185, 188–190, 192, 198, 200–207, 217, 218–222, 259–263, 275, 290–293, 295, 305, 306, 317, 322, 324, 335, 347–349, 364, 375, 379, 388, 439, 456, 460, 461, 471, 478, 482, 484, 486, 490, 493, 500, 502, 504, 505, 508, 513, 526, 528, 540, 542–546, 554, 556, 558, 562, 563, 566, 570, 571, 574, 578, 579, 590, 632, 634–636.
  Pilgrimages and Votive Offerings, 23, 30, 33, 36, 37, 46, 59, 61, 80–82, 86, 103, 122, 147, 171, 173, 197, 229, 239, 272, 306, 311, 314, 319, 322, 325, 327, 393, 404, 459, 462, 465, 525, 577–580.
  Planting and Sowing, 14, 101, 113, 166, 179, 185, 194, 209, 263, 264, 278, 279, 281–283, 285, 286, 288, 289, 291–293, 363, 380, 395–397, 404, 409, 410, 439, 445, 454, 462, 464, 465, 477, 513, 542, 549–551, 564, 586, 596, 617, 631, 639.
  Servants and Slaves, 52, 65, 71, 72, 120, 125, 200, 201, 204, 281, 293, 300, 344, 364, 411, 437, 442, 544, 553, 622, 623, 634.
  Shepherds and Watchmen, 21, 37, 44–46, 87, 92, 107, 111, 186, 204, 238, 276, 278, 282, 293, 316, 334, 349, 357, 381, 405, 424, 425, 438, 439, 471, 477, 481, 493, 532, 568, 591–596.
  Shops and Streets, 142–144, 273, 302, 336, 362, 363, 367, 381, 492, 570, 593, 594, 628.
  Spinning and Weaving, 144, 145, 451, 455.
  Worship and Superstition, 11, 32–34, 36–38, 41, 43, 46–48, 51, 53, 62, 63, 81, 91, 93, 103, 104, 115, 120, 124, 125, 127, 130–133, 136, 145, 147, 152, 171, 172, 194, 200, 201, 222, 226–231, 271–274, 289, 306, 307, 318–320, 326, 369, 370, 375, 376, 379–386, 473–475, 480–484, 486–488, 500, 518, 519, 566, 578, 579, 588–591, 634, 640, 644, 648.
Manoah, 205.
Mansurah, el, near Lake Tiberias, 192; on Carmel, 224, 227, 231; in the Hûleh, 464, 465.
Manzûl, see Khân.
Marâh, el, sheepfold, 591–593.
Markab, el, 610.
Maronites, 313, 385, 580, 584, 651.
Marseilles, 651.
Marsh, 71, 165, 166, 187, 211, 214, 215, 224, 225, 232, 234, 242, 244, 259, 303, 305, 356, 357, 361, 362, 396, 412, 423, 430, 435, 450–455, 459–464, 478, 529, 530, 552, 554, 559, 631.

Mary Magdalene, 395.
Mary, the Virgin, 30, 31–37, 57, 80, 86, 239, 240, 308, 309, 311, 318, 319, 322, 323, 428.
Masada, 400.
Mash, 462.
Massacres in 1860, 489, 500, 502–505, 513.
Mastic, 170, 171.
M'asûba, el, 255.
Matthew, the Apostle, 315, 377, 430.
Maundeville, Sir John, 23, 53.
Maundrell, Henry, 23, 86, 149, 312, 362, 564, 630.
Maximianopolis, 212.
McCheyne, R. M., 427.
Medes, 113, 555.
Medfeneh, el, 265.
Medina, el, 301.
Mediterranean, 68, 70, 77, 98, 153, 164, 209–212, 214, 227, 231, 233–251, 263, 265–268, 290, 296, 302, 313, 320, 325, 326, 330, 331, 346–349, 360, 378, 393, 436, 438, 447, 449, 477, 486, 494, 495, 510, 513, 514, 520, 522, 530, 537, 539, 551, 553, 554, 560, 579, 583, 601, 604–631, 634–636, 638, 644–651.
Medlar-tree, Arabic Z'arûr, 96.
Megiddo, 172, 191, 208–214, 216, 221, 232.
Meirôn, 147, 275, 277, 278, 294, 401, 417, 575–580, 583.
Meis el Jebel, 462, 555, 558, 559.
Mejdel, el, 343, 346, 391–395, 408.
Mejdel Kerûm, 275.
Mejdel esh Shems, 473.
Mejedd'a, el, 213.
Melchizedek, 123, 124.
Melek el Ashraf, Sultân, 248.
Melek Murâd ed Dîn, 477.
Melons, 166, 526.
Menahem, 114.
Menander, 617, 628.
Menelaus, 649.
Mensa Christi, 319, 402.
Merj 'Ayûn, 114, 287, 454, 456, 459, 478, 494, 528–530, 538, 539, 543–545, 552, 554.
Merj Ibn 'Âmir, see Esdraelon.
Merj el Ghŭrûk, 165, 166.
Merj Ibn 'Omeir, see Ajalon, valley.
Merom, see Hûleh, el.
Meroth, see Meirôn.
Merrill, Selah, Dr., 163, 336–338, 408.
Mes'adíyeh, el, 422.
Mes'âdy, el, 471.
Meshech, 623.
Meshghûrah, el, 531.
Mesopotamia, 276, 517.
Metâwileh, 503, 543, 555–558, 563, 586, 588–591, 626, 627, 631, 651.
Mezra'ah, el, near Nazareth, 209; near Acre, 268.
Mî'âr, el, 275, 294.
Micah, of Mount Ephraim, 38, 554.
Mice, 397.
Michaëlis, 139, 140.
Michaud, M., 403.
Michmash, 65, 79, 87–90, 93.
Midianites, 155, 167, 168, 179–185, 199, 210, 326, 360.
Migdal-el, see Mijdel, el.
Migron, 89–91.
Mildew, see Blight.
Mile-stone, Roman, 637, 638.
Millet, 166, 209.
Mills, 111, 112, 148, 154, 186, 187, 212, 252, 256, 277, 278, 286, 340, 392, 413-416, 453, 457, 464, 466, 469, 606, 628.
Milton, 382.
Mina, el, 610.
Minnith, 623, 624.
Mirage, 325.
Miriam, the sister of Moses, 43.
Misrephoth-maim, 266, 554.
Missions, 383, 384, 487.
Mizpah, Mizpeh, 36, 67, 68, 72, 77, 79.
Mizpeh, of Moab, 252, 553.
Moab, Moabite, 39–42, 46, 68, 99, 252, 273, 522, 561, 565.
Moles, 397.
Moloch, 518, 519, 598.
Monks, 36, 55, 57, 197, 237–241, 312, 316–320, 325, 375, 376, 382, 393, 570, 641.
Montefiore, Sir Moses, 27.
Moody, Mr., 46.
Moreh, near Shechem, 137; near Jezreel, 179, 199.
Moriah, Mount, 123–125.
Mormons, 260.
Mosaic, 602, 603.
Moses, 26, 41–43, 68, 131, 137–139, 259, 262, 282, 283, 289, 293, 300, 301, 342–344, 435, 452, 486, 528, 535, 551, 563, 584, 588, 589, 591, 597, 605, 608.

Mosk, 46, 67-69, 103, 104, 118, 143, 144, 195, 252, 382, 402, 419, 445, 525.
Moslems, 8, 27, 42, 43, 46, 47, 69, 86, 104, 119, 122, 145, 147, 151, 165, 172, 173, 205, 229, 230, 236, 238, 248, 250, 259, 260, 275, 302, 312, 313, 318, 320, 356, 372, 395, 404, 445, 474, 486, 487, 501–504, 510, 518, 555, 556, 564, 568, 579, 583, 588, 589, 599, 603, 617, 627, 648, 650, 651.
Mother-of-pearl, 47.
Mount of the Beatitudes, see Kŭrûn Hattîn.
Mount of Precipitation, 209, 314, 317, 319, 400.
Mount of Temptation, 398, 399.
Mount of Transfiguration, 323, 325, 327, 523.
Mudâfeh, see Khân.
Mughâr, el, 275, 277, 278, 280, 286, 294, 404.
Mughâret ed Dahab, 145.
Mughâret Khŭreitûn, 49.
Mughâret Tublûn, 642.
Mughâribeh, 445, 640.
Muhammed, the prophet, 356, 436, 438, 474, 486, 556, 588.
Muhammed 'Aly, 232, 500, 564.
Muhammedans, see Moslems.
Mŭhrakah, el, 200, 224, 227–231.
Mujîr ed Dîn, 549.
Mukâm, 26, 50, 62, 63, 68, 95, 96, 145–147, 151, 160, 173, 275, 306, 308, 309, 404, 445, 446, 459, 465, 471, 473, 474, 485, 487, 500, 510, 586, 631, 633, 634, 639, 648.
Mukâm Benât Y'akôb, 445, 446.
Mukhâlid, el, 410.
Mŭkhmâs, see Michmash.
Mŭkhna, el, 108, 138, 146, 149, 168.
Mukhtâra, el, 493.
Mukŭtt'a, el, see Kishon.
Mulberry-trees, 24, 143, 299, 500, 507, 508, 606, 609, 621, 639.
Mules, Muleteers, 21, 35, 51, 73, 86, 100, 110, 154, 156, 192, 197, 225, 233, 320, 342, 356, 360, 375, 381, 410, 424, 434, 442, 471, 486, 494, 526, 542–544, 579, 623.
Mŭnârâh, el, 551.
Muntarah, el, 638.
Murex, 619, 620, 647.
Mustard, 163, 380, 453.
Musul, el, 249.
Mutawâly, see Metâwileh.
Mutŭlleh, el, 530, 543.
Muzâr, Saints' tomb, see Mukâm.
Myrobalanum, 159.
Myrtle, 484.

NAAMAN, 120, 400.
Nâblus, 84, 87, 99–102, 106–112, 116, 120, 121, 123, 124, 134, 136–147, 149, 150, 153–156, 163, 165–170, 172, 185, 224, 380, 495, 506, 525.
Naboth, 113, 120, 177, 187–189.
Nahash, 195.
"Nail," see Tent-pin.
Nain, Arabic Nein, 205–207, 209, 211, 214.
N'amân, en, Nahr, 243, 244, 250, 423.
Naomi, 39, 41, 42.
Naphtali, 114, 138, 180, 181, 183, 214, 216, 222, 245, 246, 251, 259, 277, 279–282, 306, 324, 341, 410, 466, 467, 473, 478, 506, 529, 530, 537, 541, 547, 551, 553, 555, 557, 559, 561, 565, 575, 582, 586, 622.
Napier, Commodore, 248.
Napoleon I., 207, 253, 312.
Napoleon III., 331.
Nargîleh, water-pipe, 144, 330.
Nathanael, 304, 311, 317, 323.
Natives, see Arabs, native.
Natural Bridge, over the Lîtâny, 531–534.
Nawâimmeh, ford, 164.
Nazarene, Nazarites, 315, 316.
Nazareth, 172, 173, 207–209, 211, 213, 217, 241, 260, 270, 272, 302–305, 308–325, 333, 335, 376, 378, 379, 381, 386, 400, 402, 403, 456, 476, 495, 573, 574.
Neapolis, see Nâblus.
Neb'a Niha, 543.
Neb'a er Râhib, 637.
Neb'a et Tâsy, 637, 638.
Nebo, 522.
Nebuchadnezzar, 80, 326, 625, 627.
Neby Habîb, 194.
Neby Hŭzzûr, 586.
Neby Isma'îl, 241, 308, 309, 320–322.
Neby Sa'îd, see Neby Isma'îl.
Neby Samwîl, 65–70.
Neby Shu'eib, 404.
Neby Sidûn, 648.
Neby Sîjud, 648.
Neby Sŭfa, 510.
Neby Sûr, 631.
Neby Yehya, 119.

Neby Yûnas, 287.
Nehemiah, 61, 79, 116, 124, 129, 130, 132.
Nejd, en, 301.
Nephtoah, see Lifta.
Ner, 71.
Nergal, 115.
Nero, Neroneas, 482.
Nests, 410, 411, 455.
Net, see Fish, Fishing.
Nettles, 420.
Nibhaz, 115.
Niche, 480, 511, 560, 577, 642.
Niche, for prayer, see Kibleh.
Nicolayson, Mr., 51.
Nîha, 531.
Nile, 409, 416, 429, 450, 452, 463, 530.
Nineveh, 305, 451, 562.
Noah, 527, 608, 609, 611, 648.
Now, Mr., 249.
Nubia, 301.
Nŭbk, 155, 194.
Nŭbk, en, near Gamala, 370.
Nuhf, en, 276.
Nun, 158, 586, 631.
Nures, en, 190.
Nusair, Nusairîyeh, 485–488.
Nusairîyeh Mountains, 485–488, 610, 611.
Nusleh, en, 192.

Oak, 96, 104, 107, 132, 137, 171, 180, 211, 222–224, 252, 257, 263, 295, 302, 308, 309, 324–327, 440, 445, 456, 457, 464, 467, 469–471, 473–476, 481, 484, 485, 494, 495, 500, 533, 541, 551, 552, 558, 559, 563, 591, 595, 623.
Obadiah, 225, 232, 580.
'Obeidîyeh, el, 334.
Odyssey, 649.
Offence, Mount of, 8.
Og, 371, 551.
Oleander, 154, 420, 421, 449, 457, 484, 485, 507, 509, 533, 637.
Olive, oil, and tree, 30, 40, 50–52, 59, 61, 70, 99–102, 110–112, 141, 143, 144, 153, 166, 182, 190, 199, 209, 236, 250, 255, 277, 279, 281, 283, 286–289, 294, 299, 311, 313, 404, 409, 456, 465, 469, 478, 484, 497, 499, 500, 508, 533, 558, 562, 565, 566, 578, 588, 597, 598, 609, 610, 621, 624.
Olives, Mount of, 5–9, 30.
Olympus, 424.
Omnibus, 64.
Omri, 113.
Onomasticon, 48, 76, 86, 97, 165, 168, 372.
Ophir, 625.
Ophrah, see Taiyibeh, et.
Orange, 110, 143, 199, 224, 268, 324.
Organ, 316.
Orient, Orientals, 9, 15, 39, 43, 51, 52, 111, 121, 145, 169, 171, 174, 201, 210, 218, 221, 222, 232, 236, 250, 260, 272, 276, 284, 332, 356, 379, 382, 384, 385, 388, 395, 406, 407, 442, 449, 463, 517, 518, 525, 555, 563, 579, 584, 588, 589, 593, 594, 596, 612, 620, 627, 636.
Origen, 353, 614.
Orinthonopolis, 633.
Orontes, 244, 423, 537.
Ostriches, 11.
'Othmân Aga, 504, 505.
Oven, 131, 291.
Overseer, 281–284, 288.
Owl, 223, 266, 565.
Oxen, see Cattle.

Padan-aram, 93, 137, 153, 163, 449.
Palace, 489, 492, 501, 502, 504, 505, 513, 555, 601, 608.
Palætyrus, 621, 624, 625, 629, 648.
Palestine, 30, 31, 68, 98–100, 116, 122, 123, 143–145, 152, 157, 160, 166, 170, 175, 195, 210, 222, 232, 236, 239, 248, 264, 290, 308, 321, 379, 392, 396, 421, 452, 455, 463, 465, 476, 480, 481, 487, 520, 538, 561, 563, 581, 582, 584, 599, 601, 611, 626, 651.
Palestine, Central, 98, 99, 109, 110, 155, 162, 195, 223, 311, 312.
Palestine Exploration Fund, 48, 70, 76, 118, 168, 393, 398, 407, 444, 568.
Palestine Exploration Society, 163, 336–338, 393, 408.
Palestine, Southern, 19, 24, 88, 98, 196, 264, 609, 624.
Palm, 64, 78, 132, 159, 172, 209, 222, 236, 241, 250, 268, 301, 422, 608, 609, 632.
Palmyra, 118, 362, 537.
Pan, Panium, 467, 480–482, 484, 560.
Panthers, 170, 330–332, 450, 591, 594.
Papyrus, 412, 451, 452, 455, 528.
Paris, 331, 500, 603.

Partridge, 278, 306, 388, 411.
Paschal Lamb, 581, 582.
Pasha, 141, 143, 156, 165, 251–253, 312, 382, 490, 504, 543, 574, 606, 621.
Passover, 131, 132.
Patriarchs, 27, 36, 97, 125, 446.
Paul, the Apostle, 74, 241, 245, 273, 449, 574, 577, 589, 626, 650.
Paulinus, 614, 615.
Pears, 70, 100.
Peasant, Native, see Arabs, Native.
Pease, 143.
Pekah, 114.
Pelican, 450, 451.
Pella, see Tŭbŭkat Fahil.
Peniel, 163.
Pentateuch, 26.
Peræa, 332.
Perizzites, 99, 553.
Persia, Persian, 37, 356, 487, 588, 589, 623–625, 650.
Persian Gulf, 623, 624.
Peter, the Apostle, 273, 327, 345, 349, 352, 353, 358, 373–376, 378, 394, 413, 419, 423, 429–431, 483, 589.
Petruchio, 261.
Peutinger Tables, 173.
Pharaoh, 139, 210, 213, 300, 463, 528.
Pharisees, 41, 378, 388, 566.
Pharpar, 534.
Phiala, lake, 438, 439, 469–473, 491.
Philadelphia, 359.
Philip, the Apostle, 304, 311, 413.
Philip, the Evangelist, 55, 56.
Philip, King of Macedonia, 639, 640.
Philip, the Tetrarch, 423, 426, 482.
Philistia, 50, 56, 68, 125, 210, 241, 583.
Philistines, 24, 30, 62, 65, 88, 89, 91, 93, 103, 173, 174, 185, 194, 199, 201, 204, 210, 568.
Phineas, 108, 136.
Phocas, 239, 635.
Phœnicia, Phœnicians, 244, 247, 256, 265, 274, 480–482, 488, 517, 518, 554, 565, 598–600, 604, 608–612, 618, 619, 625, 626, 628, 631, 633, 642–645, 648, 650.
Photograph, 79, 277, 509.
Phurah, 181.
Phut, 623.
Pigeon, see Dove.
Pigeon-house, 561.
Pilate, Pontius, 80, 82.
Pilgrims, see under Manners and Customs.
Pine, 410.
Pipe, see Tobacco.
Pirates, 631.
Pisgah, 68, 522, 551.
Pistachio, 559.
Pit, see Cisterns.
Pitch, 527, 528, 623.
Pitcher, see Jars.
Plague, 66, 574, 641.
Platos, 610.
Pliny, 244, 265, 285, 619.
Plymouth Rock, 272.
Pomegranate, 89–91, 100, 110, 143, 199, 313.
Pompey, 116, 358.
Pool, 70, 71, 92, 128, 252, 265, 275, 306, 392, 401, 414–416, 429, 450, 453, 457, 461, 506, 507, 513, 529, 555, 558, 575, 605, 606.
Poplar, 484.
Porters, 542, 543.
Pottage, 201, 202.
Pottery, 16, 465, 493, 494.
Prayer, the Lord's, 7.
Prickly-pear, 152, 172, 199, 209, 313, 404.
Printing-office, 565.
Promised Land, see Holy Land.
Promontorium Album, see Râs el Abyad.
Prophets, Tombs of, 7.
Protestants, 46, 100, 313, 357, 383, 474, 489–494, 501, 503, 505, 538, 539, 596.
Proverbs, Arabic, 9–19, 42, 347, 356, 389, 391.
Proverbs, Book of, 9, 10.
Proverbs, Hebrew, 9–19, 358.
Psalms of David, 47.
Ptolemais, see Acre.
Ptolemy, 173, 245.
Pul, 114, 132.
Purim, 580.

QUARESMIUS, 239.
Quarries, 8, 69, 84, 253, 314, 317, 511, 599, 633.
Quicksands, 631.
Quince, 110.

RAAMAH, 624, 625.
Rabbi, 105, 577–580.
Rabbit, 257, 258.

Rabboth-ammon, 359.
Rachel, 25–29, 38, 92.
Rachel's Tomb, 25–29, 50.
Railway, 81, 145, 236, 372, 537.
Rain, 10, 44, 86, 87, 99, 174, 175, 211, 214, 215, 218, 227, 231, 232, 261, 286, 291, 303, 306, 340, 341, 346, 396, 397, 451, 454, 455, 457, 465, 507, 523, 528, 542, 543, 549, 550, 552, 596, 619, 632.
Rajib, er, 108.
Râm, er, see Ramah of Benjamin.
Râm Allah, 79, 100.
Ramadân, er, 590.
Ramah, 28, 29.
Ramah of Benjamin, 28, 67–69, 77–79, 87, 222.
Ramah, of Naphtali, Arabic Râmeh, 276–280.
Ramleh, 66, 75, 100, 152, 168.
Ramoth-gilead, see Salt, es.
Raphana, 369.
Râs el Abyad, 241, 257, 265, 266.
Râs el 'Ain, 252, 265, 392, 601, 604–607, 618, 621, 629.
Râs el Musheîrifeh, 266, 267.
Râs en Nab'a, at Bâniâs, 467–469, 480–483, 485.
Râs en Nâkûrah, 246, 250, 251, 262, 263, 265, 266, 587, 609, 611.
Râs esh Shŭkah, 609.
Râsheiyet el Fukhkhar, 493, 494, 499.
Rasheiyet el Wady, 504, 513, 519.
Rashîd Pasha; Rashîdîyeh, er, 606, 621.
R'ayân, Arabs, 166.
Raymond, Count, 308.
Reapers, see under Manners and Customs, Harvest and Threshing.
Rebekah, 27, 92.
Rechab, 85.
Red Sea, 47, 446, 612.
Reeds, see Cane.
Reem, 462, 463.
Refuge, Cities of, 140, 559.
Rehob, 547.
Rehoboam, 141, 479.
Rehoboth, 94.
Reineh, er, 309, 573.
Reland, M., 248, 483.
Relics, 36, 37, 46, 47, 376.
Renan, M., 598, 600, 602, 603, 642.
Rephaim, 23, 24.
Reservoir, see Pool.
Reuben, 114, 138, 161.
Rhinoceros, 258.
Ribla, 423.
Rice, 143, 205, 464.
Rîhân, Jebel, 554, 637, 648.
Rimmon, see Rŭmmâneh, er.
Rimmon, "the rock," 79, 105, 107.
Rings, see under Manners and Customs, Garments and Sleeping.
Road, carriage, 59, 63–65.
Road, Roman, 100, 224, 228, 265, 266, 294, 336, 337, 632, 637, 638.
Robber, 17, 61, 64, 101, 104, 111, 157, 165, 183, 193, 194, 207, 208, 223, 243, 299, 317, 328, 329, 334, 359–361, 363, 364, 369, 372, 397–399, 405, 409, 410, 438, 442, 444, 449, 450, 471, 502, 504, 510, 525, 559, 565, 568, 574, 594, 641.
Robinson, Edward, Dr., 51, 53, 61, 67, 68, 70, 75, 76, 89, 95, 107, 117, 118, 136, 153, 163, 168, 192, 196, 212, 238, 245, 248, 255, 302, 304, 320–322, 375, 400, 403, 408, 421, 424, 428, 429, 464, 480, 483, 488, 514, 515, 517, 531, 546, 547, 580, 586, 587, 616, 634.
Rodgers, M. E., Miss, "Domestic Life in Palestine," 131, 132, 143, 144.
Rome, Romans, 33, 55, 59, 61, 74, 100, 105, 109, 113, 116, 133, 144, 162, 165, 168, 195, 196, 210, 211, 213, 223, 225, 230, 236, 265–267, 270, 277, 294, 308, 309, 311, 333, 344, 356, 365, 366, 377, 378, 398, 411, 419, 423, 429, 482, 483, 520, 549, 575, 577, 583, 606, 609, 621, 626, 632, 637, 638, 645, 650.
Rooks, 454, 455.
Roses, 53, 143, 457.
Ruahîneh, er, 530, 545, 552.
Ruins, 20, 54, 69, 78, 79, 83, 84, 86–88, 91, 92, 94–96, 100, 103–108, 111, 112, 117–120, 125–131, 136, 140, 144, 145, 148, 149, 152, 162, 163, 173, 192–197, 212, 214, 216, 223, 224, 231, 236, 238, 239, 246, 248, 253–257, 259, 263, 265, 266, 275, 277, 280, 287, 294, 302–306, 317, 324, 329, 330, 335, 341, 345, 353, 365–371, 394, 397, 398, 400–402, 404, 411–423, 429, 430, 433, 436, 440, 441, 451, 453, 458, 465–467, 474, 476–478, 480, 481, 483–485, 488, 494, 495, 497–499, 502, 509–517, 519–522, 527, 540, 547–549, 557, 560, 575, 576, 580–583, 585–588, 596–598,

601, 606, 608, 610, 613–618, 626, 628, 629, 633–635, 638, 646–648.
Rŭkhleh, 514–517, 519.
Rumeish, er, 570, 583, 584.
Rŭmmâneh, er, 303, 305.
Rŭmmôn, see Rimmon, "the rock."
Runner, before a chariot, 227, 231, 232.
Russia, Russian, 19, 490.
Ruth, Book of, 39, 42.
Ruth, the Moabitess, 29, 39–43.
Ruwâd, er, see Arvad, Arvadites.
Ruweis, er, 275.

SA'ADÎYEH, es, 211, 230, 234.
Sa'âreh, es, 469–471, 484.
Sabbatical River, 610.
Sabine Women, 105.
Sacks, 65, 301.
Sacrifice, 11, 72, 124–128, 131, 132, 224, 226–231, 276, 436, 441, 518, 519.
Sacy, de, M., 128, 500.
Saddles, 194, 387, 391, 449, 491, 526, 629.
Sadducees, 566.
Safed, 22, 147, 153, 217, 278, 321, 371, 378, 381, 403, 408, 410, 414, 424, 444, 445, 495, 524, 542, 543, 549, 564–574, 577, 580, 583, 585, 641.
Sa'îd Beg Jemblât, 493.
Sâkût, 163; see also Succoth.
Saladin, 173, 207, 303, 308, 312, 403, 549, 626, 650.
Salem, 123, 124, 553.
Salim, 153.
Sâlim, 123, 153, 156.
Salma, 29.
Salt, 141, 287, 301, 361–363.
Salt, es, 155, 156, 164, 187, 264.
Samachonitis, lake, 436, 586.
Samaria, 6, 31, 110–122, 132, 133, 136, 141, 146, 150, 151, 153, 155, 165, 168, 171–173, 177, 201, 208, 211, 215, 237, 320, 325, 505, 522, 551, 565, 622.
Samaritan Pentateuch, 134–136.
Samaritan Temple, 97, 110, 123–130.
Samaritans, 108, 114–116, 121–125, 127–136, 145–147, 149–151, 229.
Samuel, 26–29, 52, 65–68, 77, 103, 106, 204, 459.
Sanballat, 124, 129, 130.
Sanchoniathon, 518.
Sanhedrim, 583.
Sanîk, el, Nahr, 637, 638.
Sankey, Mr., 46.
Sânûr, es, 151, 165, 166.
Saracen, Saracenic, 25, 118, 195, 210, 236, 256, 308, 309, 326, 403, 477, 483, 525, 549, 557, 626, 647, 650.
Sarah, 27, 92.
Sarcophagus, 337, 338, 368, 445, 557, 560, 575, 600, 633, 642–645, 648.
Sarepta, 232, 233, 400, 609, 633–635.
Saul, 26–29, 45, 48, 59, 65, 71, 76, 77, 85, 88–90, 93, 173, 174, 177, 185, 194, 195, 200, 203, 204, 210, 388, 442, 443, 593.
Saxon, 47.
Scala Tyriorum, see Râs en Nâkûrah.
Scarecrow, 425, 426.
Schechem, see Nâblus.
Schleifen, Count and Countess, 494, 495, 541–544.
Schools, 46, 100, 236, 490, 508, 509, 565, 583.
Scopus, 76, 77.
Scorpions, 478–480.
Scrip, 404, 405.
Scythians, 195.
Scythopolis, see Beisân.
Seals, 465.
Sebaste, Arabic Sebŭstieh, see Samaria.
Seffûrieh, 270, 302, 305, 307–310, 321.
Seijur, es, 276.
Seil, see Cloud-burst.
Seilûn, see Shiloh.
Seîyed Yehûdah, 435, 465–467.
Selamis, 280.
Seleucia, 426.
Seleucidæ, 564.
Selukia, 440.
Semady, 260, 317.
Semakh, es, on Lake Tiberias, 371, 372.
Semakh, es, on the Ladder of Tyre, 255.
Semûnieh, 211, 222, 223, 270, 306.
Seneh, 89.
Senir, 623; see also Shenir.
Sennacherib, 87.
Sepharvaim, Sepharvites, 115.
Sepphoris, see Seffûrieh.
Septuagint, 50, 59, 201, 527.
Sepulchres, rock-cut, see Tombs.
Seraiyib, es, 552.
Serpents, 11, 591.

Sesame, 209, 464, 525.
Severus, Julius, 55 ; Septimus, 638.
Sh'afât, 77.
Shahîn Abu Bŭrakât, 491, 492.
Shajerah, esh, 207, 324, 573.
Shakiâ, esh, 557.
Shakspeare, 79, 272, 274.
Shalem, see Sâlim.
Shalman, 400.
Shalmaneser, 112, 114, 132, 554, 622, 650.
Shâm Jaulân, 441.
Shamgar, 223, 224.
Shapan, 258.
Shâra, esh, 329.
Sharon, 98, 100, 237, 241, 452, 457.
Sheba, country, 624, 625.
Sheba, son of Bichri, 71, 544, 546.
Sheep, 11, 21, 45, 51, 52, 111, 125, 131, 145, 186, 198, 205, 208, 264, 275, 276, 299, 306, 334, 358, 387, 397, 436–439, 441, 520, 591, 594, 595, 603, 624, 632.
Sheepfold, see Marâh, el.
Shefa 'Omr, 244, 302, 303, 308.
Sheffield, 144.
Shehâb Emîrs, 165, 501, 502.
Sheibân el Aye, 95, 96.
Sheikh, 48, 50, 61, 64, 85, 94–96, 111, 124, 198, 205, 218, 281, 426, 436, 440–444, 486, 500–503, 505, 543, 563, 586, 631, 632.
Sheikh, Jebel, esh, see Hermon.
Sheikh 'Aly el Mughraby, 260, 261.
Sheikh Daraik, 459.
Sheikh Dâûd, 253.
Sheikh Fareij, 359, 360, 363, 439, 441–444.
Sheikh Hazaib, 464, 465.
Sheikh Ibrahîm el Hakîm, 487.
Sheikh Kabarûh, 639.
Sheikh Mahmûd, 359, 361, 363, 369, 370.
Sheikh Nâsîf Abu Nekad, 503.
Sheikh 'Othmân el Hâzûry, 473–475.
Shelaby, Y'akôb, esh, 124, 127, 135.
Shemaiah, 61.
Shemer, 113.
Shemitic, 518, 527.
Shenir, 523, 623.
Shepherd's Crook, 596.
Shepherds, see under Manners and Customs.
Shepherds' Fields, Bethlehem, 44–46.
Sherah, 74.
Sherâr, esh, 192, 328, 329.
Sherî'at el Manâderah, see Jarmuk, el Nahr.
Shib'a, 485, 489, 494, 519, 552.
Shîites, 555, 589.
Shiloh, 102–107, 459.
Shiloh, daughters of, 105.
"Ship," see Boat.
Shishak, 18.
Shoes, see under Manners and Customs, Garments and Sleeping.
Shunammite, 200, 201, 273, 634.
Shunem, see Sôlam.
Shŭttah, 182–184, 203.
Sichem, 136, 137.
Siddim, 175, 528, 552.
Sidon, Sidonian, 133, 140, 180, 225, 232, 241, 246–248, 260, 348, 361, 362, 457, 458, 481, 518, 522, 523, 537–540, 547, 551, 554, 570, 589, 590, 598, 608–611, 613, 620, 622, 623, 628, 630, 633, 635–639, 642, 644–651.
Sidonian purple, 647, 649, 650.
Sidr, 155, 455.
Sihon, 551.
Silk, 24, 144.
Siloam, 8, 289.
Simeon, 111, 114, 137, 138.
Simeon, Ben Jochai, Rabbi, 577–580.
Simonias, see Semûnieh.
Simyra, 610.
Sîn, Nahr, es, 610.
Sin, Sinite, 487, 610.
Sinai, 99, 272, 568, 632.
Sindiâneh, es, 440.
Sinjil, 101, 102, 105.
Sion, 523.
Sîrîn, es, 329.
Sirion, 523, 623.
Sirocco, 76, 186, 262, 290, 330, 555, 557.
Sisera, 210, 213–222, 225, 324, 326, 559, 586
Sit, 505, 637.
Skaik, 436.
Slime-pits, 527, 528.
Smith, Eli, Dr., 491.
Smith, Sir Sidney, 312.
Smyrna, 593.
Soap, 144, 145, 287, 288.
Sôba, es, 59.
Socoh, 48.
Sodom, 124, 158, 447, 528, 552.
Sogane, 280, 306, 426.
Sôlam, 182, 184, 197–201, 209.

Solomon, 8-14, 16-18, 47, 64, 65, 71, 72, 74, 118, 124, 153, 170, 190, 195, 213, 257, 261, 276, 282, 283, 285, 286, 294, 300, 380, 425, 456, 537, 550, 586, 599, 600, 620-622, 637, 649.
Solomon's Pools, 46, 51, 140, 605.
Sonnites, 589.
Sostratus, 139.
Soudah, es, 192.
Spain, 612, 623, 624.
Sparrow, 154, 380, 410, 455.
Spear, see Arms.
Spiers, R. Phené, 582.
Spitting, 42, 43.
Springs, hot, 333-336, 340-342, 345, 346, 352, 573.
St. John in the Wilderness, 57-59.
St. Louis, castle, 638, 647, 648, 651.
St. Mary's Well, 58.
St. Petersburg, 490.
St. Philip's Fountain, 55-57.
Staff, 405, 406.
Stage-coach, 64.
Stanhope, Lady Hester, 362.
Stanley, A. P., Dean, 68, 77, 123-125, 128, 326, 395, 458, 459.
Stopford, Admiral, 248.
Storehouse, 281, 465.
Stork, 224, 478.
Storm, 10, 86, 87, 333, 351, 352, 368, 369, 373, 411, 495, 507, 528-530, 541-543, 619, 632.
Strabo, 610, 621, 633.
Stratford de Redcliffe, Sir, 490.
Succoth, 162, 163, 185, 195.
Succoth-benoth, 115.
Suez, 529.
Sugar-cane, 340.
Sujân, 435, 436.
Sûk el Khân, see Khân Hâsbeiya.
Sŭkhnîn, see Sogane.
Suleimân Pasha, 253.
Sultân, 14, 32, 46, 141, 248, 312, 526, 543.
Sŭmra, 610.
Sŭnnîn, Jebel, 551 ; see also Lebanon, Mount.
Sûr, see Tyre.
Sŭrafend, 633-635 ; see also Sarepta.
Suweidîyeh, es, 633.
Swine, 338, 343, 353-358, 411, 424.
Swiss, 144.
Sycaminum, 236.
Sycamores, 281, 485, 533.
Sychar, 145, 146, 150, 553.
Sychem, 136 ; see also Nâblus.
Sylla, 423.
Synagogue, 145, 277, 278, 302, 314, 319, 368, 401, 411, 417-421, 429, 565, 575, 576, 580-583, 587, 635.
Syria, Syrian, 43, 78, 155, 171, 186, 207, 210, 228, 248, 276, 291, 292, 301, 329, 338, 346, 366, 368, 379, 384, 400, 439, 450, 452, 461, 476, 480, 487, 488, 490, 530, 546, 561, 563, 623, 625, 650.
Syrian Protestant College, 503.
Syro-Phœnician, 635.

TAANACH, Arabic, Ta'annŭk, 191, 209-214, 216.
Tabbath, 184.
Tabernacle, 72, 102, 103, 105, 106, 136.
Tabernacles, feast of, 131, 132.
Tabor, 177, 179, 203, 207-211, 214, 237, 241, 247, 277, 311, 317, 320, 323-327, 367, 403, 456, 457, 476, 495, 523.
Tacitus, 228, 229.
Tadmor, see Palmyra.
Tâhûn es Sukkar, 340.
Taiyibeh, 79, 95, 107, 180.
Talmud, 163, 574, 576.
Tamarisk, 636, 639, 647.
Tammuz, 609.
Tamyras, 609, 610.
Tancred, 236, 311.
Tantûra, see Dor.
Tar, 528, 623.
Tares, 380, 395-397.
Tarichæa, 333, 339, 340.
Tarshish, 623-625.
Tarsus, 486.
Tartak, 115.
Tartessus, 623.
Tartûs, 610, 633.
Tatian, 23.
Taxes and Taxation, 31, 32, 51-53, 114, 201, 263, 280-282, 361, 362, 377, 378, 385, 444, 492, 526.
Tayf, 301.
Tekoa, 568.
Tell, et, site of Ai, 96, 97.

Tell, et, site of Bethsaida, 422, 423, 426.
Tell, "cities on," 263.
Tell Abu Nudy, 438.
Tell Abu Yûsuf, 438.
Tell el Ahmar, 438.
Tell Aram, 438.
Tell Aramein, 438.
Tell 'Arka, 610.
Tell Birweh, 274, 275, 294.
Tell Bittîr, 54, 55.
Tell el Bûrak, 636.
Tell Bŭrm, 438.
Tell Delwa, 440.
Tell Der 'Ala [Deir 'Alla], 163.
Tell Dibbîn, 530.
Tell Dothân, 167–169, 171.
Tell el Fakhâr, 247, 250.
Tell el Farus, 439.
Tell Habeish, 606, 621.
Tell Harah, 586.
Tell Harothieh, 215–217, 221, 231, 233, 234.
Tell Hâzûr, 277.
Tell Hûm, see Capernaum.
Tell Hŭsn, 185, 191, 193-196.
Tell Jubbâta, 222.
Tell el Kâdy, 38, 123, 423, 435, 447, 453, 457–459, 461–464, 465, 467, 481, 483–485, 505, 522, 539, 547, 552–555, 599, 644, 651.
Tell Kâmôn, 209, 224.
Tell el Khaizerân, 633.
Tell el Khanzîr, 439.
Tell Kîsôn, 270, 302.
Tell Kurdâny, 244.
Tell el Kŭssîs, 224, 227, 230-232.
Tell el M'ashûk, 606.
Tell el Mutsellim, 214.
Tell Nâma, 530.
Tell Obeidîyeh, 334.
Tell es Sâfieh, 48.
Tell es Semak, 236.
Tell Semûnieh, 222, 223.
Tell Sheikh Yûsuf, 464, 552.
Tell esh Sheikha, 438.
Tell Ta'annûk, 214.
Tell eth Thôrah, 215, 232.
Tellûl 'Aiya, 440.
Tellûl Kerak, 333.
Templars, Knights, 84, 86, 207, 477, 564, 651.
Temple, 11, 55, 116, 124, 125, 127, 129, 130, 195, 225, 228, 266, 271, 272, 333, 459, 464–466, 473, 474, 480–482, 484, 488, 493, 494, 497–499, 509–522, 560, 587, 614, 617, 629 638.
Temple, Jerusalem, 9, 65, 86, 100, 124, 125, 129, 130, 132, 236, 276, 294, 378, 599, 620, 622, 625, 629, 649.
Ten Tribes, 114, 132, 133.
Tent, 30, 79, 100, 103, 110, 113, 131, 132, 137, 150, 179, 181, 182, 197, 199, 205, 207, 217, 219-222, 224, 234, 237, 253, 263, 264, 270, 317, 320, 321, 327, 330, 334, 338, 352, 360, 361, 363, 372, 375, 388, 411, 426, 435, 436, 439, 441–444, 448, 449, 455, 467, 478, 499, 509, 523, 544, 546, 552, 553, 555, 558, 559, 563, 566, 570, 572, 574, 575, 606, 618, 632, 636, 639, 645.
Tent-pin, 217, 220, 221.
Ter'alah, 163.
Terebinth, 19, 20, 49, 50, 96, 222, 224, 257, 324, 467, 475, 476, 478, 551, 558, 559, 563.
Terraces, 45, 59, 63, 69, 86, 95, 99, 100, 106, 107, 110–113, 127, 224, 286, 294, 313, 324, 327, 435, 478, 485, 488, 500, 507, 526, 572.
Tershîha, 252, 259, 260.
Tessellated pavement, 602-604.
Testament, New, 15, 86, 116, 120, 326, 342, 354, 380, 381, 394, 404, 486.
Testament, Old, 15, 114, 311, 315, 325, 326, 342, 369, 394.
Theatre, 116, 195, 196, 336, 337.
Thebez, 164.
Thelthâtha, 510–512.
Theodotus, 123.
Theophanes, 483.
Theo-prosopon, 610.
Thistles, 224, 286, 409, 410, 416, 420, 452, 555.
Threshing, threshing-floor, see under Manners and Customs, Harvest and Threshing.
Thûban, 440.
Thucydides, 631.
Thugaret B'maria, 493.
Tiberias, city, 192, 272, 293, 311, 317, 327, 333, 340–347, 352, 364, 368, 371, 372, 375, 378, 381, 387–389, 391–393, 402, 403, 410, 429, 435, 570, 572, 573, 583.
Tiberias, Lake, 123, 158, 164, 183, 271, 277, 280, 283, 295, 308, 321, 325, 332–334, 336, 338, 341, 343–355, 358, 359, 363, 364, 367, 369, 371–381, 387, 391–395, 402, 403, 405,

407, 408, 411–417, 420–424, 426–431, 435, 439, 440, 444–449, 458, 460, 495, 522, 547, 565, 573, 580, 583.
Tiberius, Emperor, 344, 378, 482.
Tibnîn, 246, 549, 555–557, 588.
Tigers, 510, 603.
Tiglath-pileser, 114, 132, 459, 530, 546, 559, 586.
Tigris, 249, 451, 465, 624.
Tiles, 127.
Timsâh, lake, 529.
Tîreh, et, 270, 287, 302.
Tirzah, 153, 164.
Titus, 55, 100, 344, 365, 366, 368, 377, 378, 482, 574, 582, 583.
Tobacco, 143, 144, 284, 293, 330, 334, 364, 375, 405, 477, 556, 604, 628.
Tobiah, 124.
Togarmah, 623.
Tokân, 166.
Tomb of Obadiah, 120.
Tombs, rock-cut, 7, 8, 27, 33, 34, 36, 45, 46, 84, 88, 92, 104, 145, 152, 195, 196, 206, 209, 223, 237, 266, 337, 338, 355, 445, 446, 453, 528, 557, 600, 601, 633, 642, 645.
Tophet, 519.
Tortosa, 610.
Towahîn Difneh, 466.
Tower, 67, 68, 92, 118, 126, 164, 177, 187, 193, 256, 257, 265–267, 302, 325, 328, 333, 345, 365–368, 414, 477, 527, 547, 618, 627.
Trachonitis, 510.
Tradition, 7, 23, 24, 45, 46, 55, 59, 67, 86, 92, 93, 105, 120, 125, 150, 227, 228, 230, 244, 317, 319, 322, 323, 327, 381, 386, 392–394, 402, 445, 449, 563–566, 586, 634.
Treasure, hid, 145, 369, 370, 564, 639–645.
Tripoli, 486, 610.
Tristram, H. B., Canon, 394, 407, 479, 513.
Troglodytes, 532.
Trojan War, 649.
Troy, 650.
Tubal, 623.
Tûbâs, 164.
Tŭbŭkat Fahil, 197, 358.
Tuleil el Fûl, see Gibeah of Saul.
Tŭllûza, 153, 154, 164.
Tŭmrah, 275, 554.
Tur'ân, et, 307.
Turkmân, 440.
Turks, Turkish, 31, 32, 61, 88, 99, 143–145, 164–166, 207, 208, 210, 223, 239, 278, 280–282, 312, 326, 332, 335, 360–362, 444, 448, 483, 492, 502–506, 542, 549, 579, 626, 639, 641, 651.
Turmus 'Âya, 102.
Turon, 244.
Turpentine-tree, 20.
Turtle-dove, see Dove.
Turtle, mud, 186.
Twelve-stones, on Gerizim, 126–128.
Tyre, 65, 129, 133, 175, 232, 241, 245, 246, 252, 265, 266, 268, 348, 392, 495, 522, 548, 549, 551, 560, 564, 570, 582, 589, 598–630, 633, 635, 636, 638, 648–651.
Tyrian Purple, 619, 620.

ULAMA, 329.
Um el 'Ajaj, 440.
Um el 'Amad, 223.
Um el 'Amed, 266.
Um el 'Awamîd, 596–598.
Um Keis, see Gadara.
Unicorn, 462, 463.
Ur of the Chaldees, 137, 447, 487.
Urijah, 61.
Urus, 463.
Uz, land of, 438, 462.
Uzziah, 568.

VAN DE VELDE, C. W. M., 162, 168, 230.
Varnish, 171.
Veil, see under Manners and Customs, Garments and Sleeping.
Venetians, 626.
Venus, 481, 510, 609.
Vespasian, 141, 228, 230, 295, 344, 365, 366, 368, 377, 582.
Vine, Vineyards, 15, 50, 51, 52, 58, 59, 61, 63, 70, 99, 100, 105, 112, 113, 141, 143, 147, 180, 190, 236, 237, 281, 286, 288, 289, 298, 299, 301, 304, 306, 357, 360, 380, 409, 424–426, 465, 500, 526, 550, 551, 564, 581, 599, 600, 602, 624.
Vinegar, 40.
Virgil, 291, 292.
Vogüé, de, M., 614.
Volcano, Volcanic, 203, 327, 329, 330, 332, 338, 346, 359, 402, 438, 439, 446, 447, 457, 458, 471, 472, 484, 509, 574.
Vulgate, 342.

Wa'al, 441.
Wady 'Abbâs, 95, 96.
Wady 'Abilîn, 302, 305.
Wady 'Aly, 65, 66.
Wady el 'Amûd, 346, 408, 583.
Wady el 'Asal, 485.
Wady 'Askar, 70.
Wady el Aye, 95, 96.
Wady el 'Ayûn, 265, 587, 591.
Wady Beit Hanîna, 59, 66.
Wady Beitîn, 95.
Wady Bel'amy, 172.
Wady el Belât, 101.
Wady Benna, 255.
Wady el Bîreh, 96.
Wady Bittîr, 54.
Wady el Bŭsîs, 501.
Wady Fadjâs, 340.
Wady Fâri'a, 153–157, 164.
Wady Feirân, 632.
Wady Ghadarîyeh, 440.
Wady el Ghŭrâb, 60.
Wady Halazôn, 275.
Wady el Hamâm, 293, 346, 391, 395, 397, 399, 400, 401, 407, 408.
Wady Hammûd, 70.
Wady Hâmûl, 266.
Wady Hujeir, 557.
Wady Hûleh, 558.
Wady el Jalûd, see Jezreel, the valley of.
Wady Jefât, 295, 303, 305.
Wady Jerâr, 95.
Wady Jermaiah, 346, 440, 441.
Wady el Jish, 575.
Wady Kherâzeh, 421.
Wady el Kŭrn, 254–257, 259, 267.
Wady Khŭshabeh, 477.
Wady el Kŭsab, 211.
Wady Kŭzrone, 252.
Wady el L'ab, 193.
Wady el Leimôn, 278, 346, 564, 565, 580, 583.
Wady Lubbân, 107.
Wady Mandhûr, 363; see also Jarmuk, el, Nahr.
Wady el Milh, 224.
Wady el Mu'addamîyeh, 561, 563.
Wady Mukhŭrkŭsh, 192.
Wady Nâshif, 421.
Wady 'Osheh, 192.
Wady er Rŭbŭdîyeh, 280, 283, 346, 404, 408, 410.
Wady Rumeish, 583.
Wady Ruzzanîyeh, 440.
Wady Sellâmeh, 278, 280, 283.
Wady Selûkiah, 557.
Wady es Semak, 346, 351–353, 355, 359, 411, 435.
Wady Semmûnia, 306.
Wady Sha'ab, 275.
Wady esh Sha'îr, 112.
Wady Sherrâr, 211, 212.
Wady Shib'a, 497–499.
Wady Shŭkaiyif, 346, 351, 359, 441, 443.
Wady Sulam, 346, 440.
Wady Suleimân, 70, 76.
Wady Sŭrâr, 53.
Wady es Suweinît, 89, 90, 96, 97.
Wady et Tawâhîn, 564.
Wady et Teim, 454, 455, 484, 493, 496, 502, 503, 509, 513, 553.
Wady Tell 'Aiyeh, 346.
Wady Tell Hûm, 421.
Wady Tellûl 'Aiya, 440.
Wady el Werd, 23, 24, 53.
Wady Yâbis, 197.
Wady ez Zeit, 156.
Wagon, 64, 65.
Wall, bowing, 572.
Walnut, 110, 409, 489, 590.
W'ar, 63, 252.
Warren, C., Captain, R.E., 21, 22, 498, 510–516, 520–522.
Wars, civil, 31, 133, 145, 166, 167, 169, 180, 223, 293, 489, 500, 502–506, 641.
Water-wheel, 275.
Watering with the foot, 275.
Wazîr, 14.
Welejeh, el, 55.
Wells, see cisterns.
Wely, see Mukâm.
Westminster Abbey, 272.
Wezâr, 173.
Wheat, 24, 40, 41, 45, 73, 85, 103, 108, 110, 111, 113, 145, 156, 180, 190, 194, 204, 205, 207, 209, 233, 251, 252, 281, 284, 288, 293, 299, 303, 306, 307, 311, 395–397, 409, 410, 433, 448, 453, 464, 513, 525, 549, 550, 564, 623, 628, 644.
Wilderness of Judea, 159, 301.

Wilderness of Wandering, 94, 148, 270, 301, 479.
William of Tyre, 265, 629.
Willows, 132, 461, 485.
Wilson, C. W., Colonel, R.E., 96, 105, 118, 125–129, 152, 368, 398, 399, 401, 402, 413–415, 417–420, 476, 581, 586.
Wilson, Dr., 149, 239.
Wine, see Vine and Vineyards.
Wine-press, 180, 599, 600.
Wolves, 11, 156, 170, 243, 441, 450, 493.
Wood, Richard, 490, 491.
Wool, 131, 132, 145, 624.
Wortabet, John, Professor, 503.
Wuld 'Aly, Arabs, 73.

XERXES, 625.

YA'BÛD, 168.
Yâfa, 270.
Yafûry, 471.
Yajûs, 20.
Yâkûk, see Hukkok.
Yâlo, 76.
Y'ar, 63, 252.
Yârôn, 575.
Yâtir, 591.
Yebna, 70.
Yerka, 244.
Yetma, 108.
Yŭhmur, 527, 531, 532.

ZAANAIM, 217, 559, 563.
Zacharias, 57, 58.

Zagazig, 529.
Zaherâny, ez, Nahr, 637.
Zahleh, 491, 503, 531.
Zalmunna, 326.
Zarthan, 162, 461.
Z'atera, ez, 108.
Za'ûra, ez, 488.
Zebah, 326.
Zebdeh, 223.
Zebedee, 431.
Zebeideh, Sit, 637.
Zebulon, 138, 180, 214, 245, 247, 248, 302, 303, 307, 324, 326, 559, 648.
Zeeb, 360.
Zelzah, 50.
Zemarites, 610.
Zenodorus, 510.
Zererath, 184.
Zer'în, see Jezreel.
Zerka, ez, 163 ; near Cæsarea, 423.
Zerubbabel, 85.
Zeruiah, 71.
Zîb, ez, see Achzib in Asher.
Zibeon, 342.
Zidon, Zidonians, see Sidon.
Ziklag, 85.
Zikr, 518.
Zimra, 487.
Zion, 19, 79, 80, 170, 290, 424, 523.
Zippor, 555.
Zohar, 577.
Zulaghit, ez, 578.
Zulph, 59, 60.

9422

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